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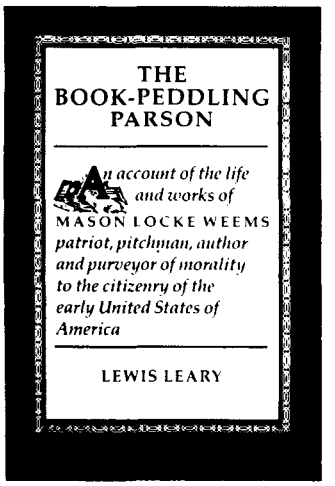

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CONTENTS

Tom Lehrer: Having Fun
Jeremy Bernstein 295

Your Basic Language Snob
Aristides 303

Democracy and Distrust:
A Lesson from Thucydides
Clifford Orwin 313

Inventing the Shtetl
Ruth Gay 329

The End of the Physician-Scientist?
Gordon N. Gill 353

"English" and the Perils of Formalism
E. D. Hirsch, Jr. 369

Ethics Without Virtue:
Moral Education in America
Christina Hoff Sommers 381

Douglas Bush Remembered
Edward Le Comte 390

Yaz
David Wetmore 396

POETRY

For a Lost Watch
Robin Shectman 312

The Lives of Penguins
Amy Clampitt 326

Sparrows
Lucy Shawgo 328

The Return of the Repressed
Irving Feldman 350

The Wrecker Driver Foresees Your Death
David Baker 351

Truth and Beauty
Robin Seyfried 379

Homage
Alan Shapiro 380

BOOKS

Soul Food
Charles L. Griswold, Jr. 401

Reviews
Roger Lewis, Jacob A. Stein, E. V. Thaw, John P. Sisk, Charles H. Karelis and Robert H. Bell, Janet Groth, Michael Burns, Peter Schwendener 406

THE READER REPLIES 431

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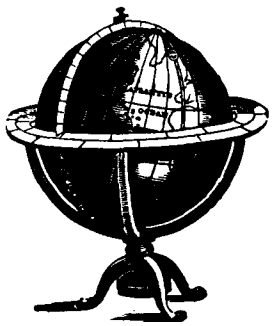

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Out of My Mind

Tom Lehrer

Having Fun

JEREMY BERNSTEIN

When they see us coming, the birdies all try an' hide,
But they still go for peanuts when coated with cyanide.
The sun's shining bright,
Ev'rything seems all right,
When we're poising pigeons in the park.

— Tom Lehrer

In 1948, my sophomore year at Harvard, I decided that, no matter what I might do in life, differential calculus would come in handy. So I dutifully enrolled in Mathematics 1, a giant course that was taught in small sections. As it happened, I had a friend who was also taking the course, and one day he showed me his corrected homework. His section man, a graduate student, had made some remarkably funny comments on the paper, and my friend told me that this was characteristic. I asked what the name of the section man was, and my friend told me that it was Tom Lehrer. At the time I made this inquiry, my friend and I were both eighteen. Although I did not know it then, Lehrer was nineteen and was already in his third year of graduate school, having entered Harvard in 1943 at the age of fourteen and having finished in three years.

I did not get to meet Lehrer until a few years later, when I began taking graduate courses in mathematics. Lehrer was still a graduate student, a status he happily retained, on and off, until 1965. By the time I met him, he had already acquired a sizable reputation around Harvard both for his singing and for several inspired pranks. In 1951, shortly after the completion of the new graduate center designed by Walter Gropius, with its Richard Lippold "world tree"—a stainless-steel statue that vaguely resembles a tree—Lehrer and a small band of associates organized two ceremonies in honor of the "tree." The first occurred on the vernal equinox, during which some of the group, a few dressed up as bulls and several others as "virgins," were sacrificed. This was followed by an Arbor Day ceremony, during which "world seeds" (ball bearings) were planted under the tree and a metal "world bird" was placed in its branches.

I graduated from Harvard that year and was in charge of the entertainment for our senior dinner at Eliot House. I managed to engage the late Al Capp, the creator of L'il Abner and a family friend, and Tom Lehrer. Capp was so impressed by Lehrer's songs that he hired him, more or less on the spot, for a television engagement on a weekly satire program that Capp then had in the Boston area. As it happened, the program only lasted for four weeks, but it was the first time that Lehrer had been let loose on the general public. Incidentally, Lehrer sang a song about television on the program, which had, as I recall, the line,

> On Tuesday nights we choose between
> Milton Berle and Fulton Sheen.

JEREMY BERNSTEIN's forthcoming book, *Three Degrees Above Absolute Zero*, is a profile of the Bell Telephone Laboratories.

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I left Harvard in 1957 and lost personal contact with Lehrer, although, like most people of my generation, I did follow his extraordinary career. Then in 1965 he disappeared, and from that day to this, except for a few fund-raising appearances, mainly for liberal political candidates, he has never again performed in public. Indeed, I often wondered if he was still among the living. But in the summer of 1980, I came across an item in a local Colorado newspaper that had the headline "Tom Lehrer Makes London Encore." Upon closer examination I discovered that the item referred to a retrospective musical called *Tomfoolery*, which consisted entirely of Lehrer songs sung by a cast of three men and a woman. Lehrer did not sing, and the London show's master of ceremonies noted that "he's fifty-two now but so fears old age that he prefers to think of himself as eleven centigrade." Lehrer did make a brief curtain call, but he said nothing.

When it became clear that *Tomfoolery* was heading for this country, I thought it might be a good excuse to renew my ancient contact with Lehrer and to find out what he had been up to and, indeed, why he had, more or less, vanished from the public scene. I managed to track Lehrer down in Cambridge, where he lives for half the year (the other half he spends in California). He said he would be coming to New York, and we decided to get together. At the appointed hour, early in the afternoon, Lehrer appeared at my apartment. The first thing I noticed was that, for all intents and purposes, he looks exactly as he did when I last saw him some twenty years ago. Whatever else he has been up to, he seems to have found some way of defeating the aging process, perhaps by remaining a bachelor. As it turned out, he had not eaten and neither had I, so we went to a nearby delicatessen and brought back two tuna fish sandwiches and a couple of apples and settled in for an afternoon of conversation.

I thought it might be a good idea to begin at the beginning, since it was never entirely clear to me how Lehrer got started in his singing career at Harvard. "As you know," he said, "I majored as an undergraduate in mathematics. I was good at it, but I was also very lazy, which is probably why I majored in it. It had the least requirements. I was going to be an English or a chemistry major, but when I looked at the list of requirements, I said 'forget it.' The mathematics department required taking a few courses—and that was that. I had entered Harvard in 1943, at fourteen, so I guess I was a semi-prodigy. The New York public schools at that time believed in allowing students to skip grades, which is why I graduated so young. But everyone in college was young then because of the war, and everyone who was not young was in the army. We had three terms a year then, so I was accelerated and got out of Harvard in three years. I began teaching in my first year in graduate school because they were desperate for teachers.

"As a kid I took piano lessons, which, at the time, meant classical piano. I never really liked that, and I spent my spare time picking up popular songs on the piano. My parents, thank heaven, instead of forcing me to continue doing something I didn't want to do, found me a popular-music piano teacher, which was rare at that time. Today it is quite common to study popular music, but in those days the usual thing was to study classical music and then to pick up popular music on your own. Having a popular-music teacher worked out very well for me. I began writing tunes when I was about seven or eight. But I was in college when I began writing parodies of popular songs—for any occasion. The only one of those songs that eventually made its way into my repertory was 'Fight Fiercely, Harvard,' which was written in 1945 and shows it. The Harvard band still plays it."

When I was an undergraduate nearly everyone had memorized:

> Fight fiercely, Harvard,
> fight, fight, fight!
> Demonstrate to them our skill.
> Albeit *they* possess the might,
> nonetheless *we* have the will.

"I started singing those songs at parties," Lehrer continued, "but never with the intention of their becoming commercial. That is why when somebody comes to me and says, 'I write songs and how can I get started in the business? What can I do?' there's no way I can give them any advice, because I did not set out to do it myself. I just assumed that no one would like my songs, except a few of my friends. My performing career began in 1950. The Harvard Law School, for some reason,

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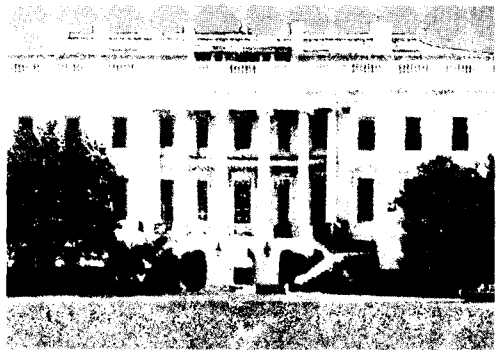

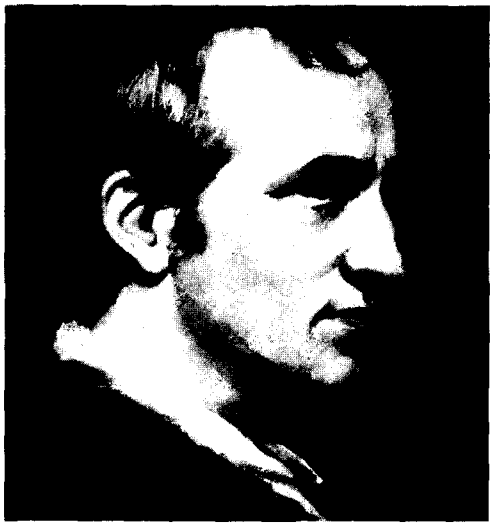

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had a quartet contest—any four people could get together and sing. I entered with four other people—we were a quintet, but that didn't matter since we were the only contestants. A representative of the Harvard freshman smoker, an annual event that featured entertainment, was at the contest. The smoker committee was always looking for free local entertainment, and so we did the Harvard freshman smoker, sharing the bill with Sally Rand, who was appearing at the Old Howard in Boston. It was a memorable night."

The original members of the group were: Lewis Branscomb, who was then a graduate teaching fellow in physics and who later became the director of the National Bureau of Standards and is now a vice-president and the director of scientific research for the IBM Corporation; David Robinson, now the executive vice-president of the Carnegie Corporation; Robert Welker, now a professor of American civilization at Case Western Reserve; and Munro Edmonson, who is now a professor of anthropology at Tulane. Branscomb had the inspired idea of having the quintet give the last "lecture" in his freshman physics course. It was entitled "The Physical Review," in honor of our professional physics journal, and was given in the large lecture hall in the Jefferson Laboratory—a gala occasion, which I attended. Among other things, the group sang Lehrer's song on the elements, which begins:

> There's antimony, arsenic, aluminum, selenium
> And hydrogen and oxygen and nitrogen and rhenium . . .

and after a breathtaking recitation of all the elements, the song ends:

> These are the only ones of which the news has come to Ha'vard
> And there may be many others, but they haven't been discavard.

It was not long afterward that the group made its "world tree" appearance, for which Lehrer wrote the parody "Trees." This was published in the *Harvard Crimson*—the first verses of Lehrer's that found their way into print. The item was picked up by *Time* magazine in a story about Gropius; the verses were given, but without attribution. When Lehrer wrote to *Time* to complain, he was told to settle matters with the *Crimson*.

"The Physical Review" was repeated the following year. "The members of the group got their degrees, and most of them scattered to the hills," Lehrer noted. "But people began asking me to sing at dance intermissions and smokers and things like that, which I would do for minimal pay. After about two years of this, I got tired of it—tired of singing the same songs. Then I thought, 'Hey, I've got these songs. I'll make a record.' It was a case of the right technology at the right time. By then there were LPs that you could ship yourself. With the old 78s this would have been impossible. I figured that if I made a record, I could sell three hundred of them. A lot of calculation went into that. Each time I sang somewhere I asked for a show of hands as to how many people would buy a record. Adding up those people plus my relatives came to three hundred. I figured out how many I could order so that I could break even at three hundred, and that turned out to be four hundred."

At this point Lehrer munched on his apple and recalled, "I looked in the Yellow Pages under 'Recording.' There were two places listed where you could record 'Happy Birthday Mother' or anything else. I went to both of them. One was polite to me and one was rude, so I chose the polite one. A couple of years ago, when I was going through my basement, I came across the bill for the original recording session. The total cost of everything—studio, tape, engineer, microphone, piano, everything—was fifteen dollars. Well, anyway, I ordered four hundred records, and they sold out very fast. I had a friend design the album cover according to my instructions, and I wrote the liner notes and took the whole thing to the printer who printed up the jackets. Then they shipped them to the presser who made the records. I got the cardboards and envelopes and handled all the mail orders myself, at least for the first few months. In fact, for awhile I sold most of the records in the local Harvard dining halls or in record stores in Harvard Square. But then I began to get a whole bunch of orders from San Francisco. It turned out that the music critic of the San Francisco *Chronicle* had devoted a whole column to the record and not only had praised it to the skies but had given the price and the box number where you could write for it."

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Lehrer's original record sold for $3.50, and a slightly later version, which I have, sold for $3.95. It was a ten-inch affair and on the cover sits a diabolical Lehrer at a grand piano. The liner explains, "Tom Lehrer, long time exponent of the *derrière-garde* in American music, is an entirely mythical figure, a figment of his parents' warped imagination. He was raised by a yak by whom he was always treated as one of the family, and ever since he was old enough to eat with the grownups he has been merely the front for a vast international syndicate of ne'er-do-wells." Ultimately the record sold some *three hundred and fifty thousand* copies and, needless to say, was no longer sold out of Lehrer's home. Eventually it was distributed by RCA, which took the orders from the original recording firm.

It was now 1953 and the Korean War was on. Lehrer was of draft age and not eager to take part in the hostilities, so he took a job at a firm called Baird-Atomic in Cambridge, which specialized in electronics and optics, work that was considered essential for the war effort. He remained at Baird for a year until he thought that "nobody was going to shoot me and I wouldn't be called upon to shoot anybody else," and then he surrendered to the draft board. Of his army experience he once commented, "I think it paid off. America is free today.

"I didn't let on," Lehrer told me as we were finishing lunch, "that I had any entertainment abilities, because I figured they'd put me into special services and send me off to Alaska or someplace to entertain the troops." In fact, he spent two years in Washington in the National Security Agency doing top secret work that made use of his mathematics. Just before going into the army, Lehrer had made his first nightclub appearance, at the Blue Angel in New York. "They hired me for the Christmas show," Lehrer noted, "figuring that I would attract the college kids home for vacation. I was on the bill with Orson Bean, among others. There was a reviewer from *The New Yorker* who, I was told, didn't like me at all. But he had the kindness not to mention me when he reviewed the rest of the show. When I got out of the army, popular concerts were just starting. There was no real concert circuit; the Kingston Trio started all that. If you said that you were going to do a concert, people assumed that you were going to play the piano or something. The only humorous concerts then were given by Anna Russell or Victor Borge. The idea of a George Carlin or a David Steinberg giving a concert just didn't exist. I did my first concert in 1957 at Hunter College in New York."

After his Hunter College concert, Lehrer spent three years touring much of the English-speaking world doing concerts. In 1959 he put out a second record, a concert recording entitled *An Evening Wasted with Tom Lehrer,* which sold more than 200,000 copies here and abroad. "I didn't want to put the record out until I was ready to retire from performing. I figured that if the record was out, who would want to come and hear me. I would just be doing my whole act on record. Doing comedy is not like being a pop singer, where audiences want to hear what they've already heard a thousand times on the record—they want to hear Sophie Tucker in person sing 'Some of These Days.' So I put the second record out—it was recorded at Harvard—as a farewell. I went back to graduate school and did five more years at the Harvard Graduate School."

Altogether Lehrer spent eleven years in graduate school, ten at Harvard, and one at Columbia. This, in itself, is a rare achievement, especially in scientific fields, where students are pushed out the door as rapidly as decency will allow. In my day at the Harvard Graduate School in physics, it was considered extremely bad form if one spent more than four years there. I asked Lehrer about it. "I'm not really a mathematician," he explained. "I'm a *teacher* of mathematics. I have been teaching it for as long as I can remember. Everyone seems to have a certain level in mathematics. I know a lot of people who do wonderfully in high school, but when they get to the calculus, they find that it is a whole other ball game and they're lost. I think that is true for almost everybody at a certain level. For some people it's subtraction. I did hang on with it. When I was about halfway through, I switched to statistics because that was more my style. I could handle that better. But I got to a certain level and found that, although I was doing it—that I *could* do it—I didn't internalize it. This is something that is difficult to explain to a non-mathematician. I think that the graduate school would have been happier if I had gotten through; but I wasn't

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taking up any space particularly, so they didn't mind.

"Of course, by the time I went back in 1960, I was the same age as the junior faculty—so I wasn't exactly a kid anymore. It was a more friendly, treated-like-equals kind of situation. I was mostly auditing courses, since I had satisfied all of my requirements for a Ph.D., written the minor thesis, and even started on my dissertation. Finally, in 1965, I decided that I wasn't going to make it. It wasn't something I wanted. I kept saying to myself that if I ever get this dissertation written, I will never have to do any research again. Then I realized that I must be telling myself something, so I decided enough is enough. There was a lot of guilt in all that—all those years invested—so to deal with that, I began teaching at M.I.T. I taught quantitative courses in the political science department—statistics and mathematical models—from 1962 to 1971. That's another reason why I can't say that I am a mathematician. I've never held an appointment in a mathematics department. I have been in the Harvard Business School, where I taught calculus in 1961; in the Harvard Education School, where I taught geometry for high school mathematics teachers from 1963 to 1965; and in the psychology department at Wellesley, where I taught statistics in 1965. In fact, in 1965 I had three appointments simultaneously—at Harvard, Wellesley, and M.I.T."

In 1964 NBC imported the British television program "That Was the Week That Was," which had been a great success in England. "I didn't think that the American version was very good," Lehrer went on, "but it was the only game of its kind in town. They seemed to be using material from everywhere, so I sent in some songs, which they used. Some of them were good and some of them weren't, but by 1965, when the show ended, I realized that I had enough songs to make a record. I particularly wanted to do it because somehow they had managed to take out the best line in each of my songs and replaced it with something vapid. I wanted some sort of record of how the songs were supposed to be. My earlier songs were mainly takeoffs on popular song forms. There wasn't much political content in them. There was one called 'The Wild West Is Where I Want to Be' that was inspired by a summer I had spent at Los Alamos in 1952. It was about the atmospheric testing of atomic bombs, but it was really intended to be a 'Home on the Range,' jokey kind of send-up. But in "That Was the Week That Was," there were specific topics in the news each week that I wrote about.

"I didn't sing on the program. Most of the songs were sung by a woman named Nancy Ames. I had the fantasy that she was a gorgeous robot who had been programmed to pronounce English correctly—that is, phonetically. She had marvelous diction, but she didn't quite understand, as far as I could tell, what the jokes were. It was better when they were sung by a comedian like Steve Allen or Buck Henry. That was another reason why I wanted to do them myself. So I called the hungry i in San Francisco, where I had appeared a couple of times in the fifties, and asked if I could do a couple of weeks there to try the songs out and to polish them up for recording. I wanted to see if the laughs really were there. So I did two weeks, and then a third when Dick Gregory couldn't appear. (He was picketing somewhere.) Warner Brothers offered to do the record, and I signed a contract with them and did a fourth week a month later to make the record. At the end of it I was finally convinced that I had no desire to be a performer. When I went back in 1965, after not having performed for five years, various people said to me that maybe I would like it and want to begin to perform again—that people would start applauding and that would make me want to resume my career. But after the second week, I realized that I was not cut out to be a performer. It requires more than the ability to do it. You have to have the desire."

With a few rare exceptions, most of them abroad, that was the last time Lehrer appeared in public. He did not write any new songs until 1970, when he was contacted by the Children's Television Workshop, which was in the process of producing "The Electric Company" for public television. "It was the first time," Lehrer continued, "that anybody had asked me to write songs other than the kinds of songs that I had already written. These new songs were just for kiddies. They weren't supposed to be satirical or political or anything like that. They were just meant to teach reading.

"Before that, every once in a while, some-

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body would come up with some idea for a satirical song he wanted me to do. But it was always the same thing over again. I remember that one lady called me up and said that she loved my songs. She told me that she thought the main problem in America was materialism and that I should write a song making fun of materialism. I told her that of course I would do it—if she paid me enough money. I couldn't resist saying that, but she was very serious and didn't think it was as funny as I thought it was.

"When 'The Electric Company' writers contacted me, it was the first time that somebody had wanted me to use my craft rather than just to repeat what I had already done. I thought it was a great idea, and I managed to write ten songs for them. One of them is called 'Silent E,' and it tries to teach kids about silent *E*'s. It still appears on reruns of 'The Electric Company.' I am amazed by how many college students, who were kids in 1970 and 1971, when the song first appeared, know it without knowing that I had anything to do with it. I didn't get any credit on the show. It was my voice, but I didn't get any particular credit. Nor did I want any. It was just fun, and 'The Electric Company' songs are the last songs I have written.

By 1971, Lehrer had been teaching at M.I.T. for nine years. "It began to be less fun," he remarked, "and I decided that I was too old not to have fun. So I tried to think of a place where I could continue to teach, in a different kind of atmosphere. They had begun to take it all very seriously at M.I.T., and then they made my course compulsory for graduate students. That was the last straw. In compulsory courses you get those people who are just sitting there, and you know they would rather be somewhere else—anywhere else. That's not how I want to teach. M.I.T. was taking it much too seriously. There were a lot of people there who seemed to think that political science is, in fact, a science, and therefore one should pay attention to quantitative approaches to it. I don't have anything against any of them personally. Personally, they were fine. But it just became less fun, and, furthermore, they moved us to a new building on the M.I.T. campus. That destroyed all communication whatsoever. So I started looking around. I had heard of Santa Cruz through magazine articles, and it sounded like the kind of place I would like to try. I wrote them out of the blue, just getting names out of their catalogue, to see if I could teach my math course there. They said OK, so I gave a year's notice to M.I.T. and went out there to try it. I loved it, and this will be my fifteenth year there."

At first Lehrer went out to California for only the three months in the winter quarter. "I had decided that, not only was I too old not to have fun, but that I never wanted to shovel snow again. I didn't want to be very cold. That's a sign of old age, but that's fair enough. In Cambridge I had been a member of a play reading group. We would read plays once a week for our mutual entertainment. Then someone got the idea that we should do a musical. That caught on so well that each year we did a musical. So when I got to Santa Cruz and saw that there was a play reading course, I thought that we could have a musical reading course too. A number of students were interested in musicals, but there was no outlet for them. So I proposed my course, and it was accepted. Now I teach my math course for one quarter and the course on musicals for the other. I am there for six months."

The idea for doing *Tomfoolery* also came to Lehrer out of the blue from Cameron Mackintosh, who had co-produced the show *Side by Side by Sondheim*, a very successful retrospective of Stephen Sondheim songs. "I had been approached by other people before," Lehrer said, "but never by somebody with a track record, who had such a definite plan and the idea for a first-class production." It took almost two years from the time Mackintosh first contacted Lehrer in 1978 until the show first opened in London on June 5, 1980, at the Criterion Theatre. It ran for a year. A Canadian production began touring Canada in November 1980, and there have also been productions in South Africa, Australia, Ireland, and Hong Kong. Two American productions ran in 1981, and Pantheon Books brought out *Too Many Songs by Tom Lehrer with Not Enough Pictures by Ronald Searle*, which is, as one might imagine, an illustrated songbook containing most of the Lehrer classics.

"I went over to London in the spring of 1980," Lehrer told me, "and spent a few weeks in the rehearsals and tryouts in Brighton and went to the opening in London. It was delightful, and I was very pleased with the

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whole idea. I think that ten years ago that kind of humor would not have worked the way it seems to now. People were too serious then. I rewrote a few things for the London performance to de-Americanize them. One thing I had to rewrite really surprised me. You may remember that in 'Poisoning Pigeons in the Park,' there is a line that goes 'and maybe we'll do in a squirrel or two.' Here, in this country, there was always a laugh there, but in London, there was nothing. I couldn't figure out why. I kept asking if I was pronouncing *squirrel* right, and if they knew what a squirrel was. Everyone said I was and they did. Finally I figured out that they don't have squirrels in their parks. Squirrels, to them, are like foxes and belong in forests. So I changed *squirrel* to *sparrow* and got the old laugh back again."

Just before Lehrer left my apartment, I asked him if he had written any songs in recent years. "No," he replied, with no apparent regret, "except for a few I have done for birthdays or special occasions—not for public consumption."

"Do you ever have any urges in that direction?" I asked him. "No. No, I don't. In the old days the ideas would just come to me, and the next time I was at a piano I would work them out. Now the ideas don't particularly come. Maybe it's because I don't find the times as funny as I used to. Maybe it's the times themselves, or maybe it's senility. I never thought of myself as a composer anyway. I am amazed by how nice the songs sound when they are played by a five-piece orchestra, like the one we had in *Tomfoolery*. Now I see that I am often referred to as 'the late Tom Lehrer.' I have a small file of clippings like that, which I cherish, because people assume that I am dead. At the time, in the fifties and sixties, when I was writing the songs, I was not really aware of the idea that they would be presented to an audience—at least not in the beginning. So I wasn't self-conscious about them. That's what happens when you are young. You do things like a kid without going through all those layers of self-censorship. I was just saying in those songs what I was thinking. Now if I wrote a song I would think, 'How will this go over with an audience?' I couldn't help thinking that. When I first wrote them, they were for my own amusement, and it turned out, much to my delight, that not only did they sell, but they are still selling—something that was totally unforeseen. Who at that time would have thought that thirty years later people would still be interested in them?"

And he said, putting on his coat, "I don't know what it means, but it's probably not good."

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Your Basic Language Snob

ARISTIDES

I don't mean to make anyone tense or otherwise edgy, but perhaps it is best you know at the outset that in me you are dealing with your basic language snob. Mention to me that when you were young your parents were very "supportive," tell me that before "finalizing" your plans you would like my "input," remark that the job in which you are "presently" employed provides you with a "nurturing environment"—say all or any of these things and you will not, I hope, see a muscle in my face move. I shall appear to show a genial interest in all you say, but beneath the geniality, make no mistake, I shall be judging you—and not altogether kindly. "Hmm," I shall be thinking, "I see that I am dealing here with someone who has a taste for psychobabble and trashy corporate and computer talk and misuses the word *presently* into the bargain." I shall, of course, say nothing about it to you: I certainly won't attempt to reform you. In fact, I rather prefer you stay the way that you are, for in using language as you do you are a source of real comfort to me. You allow me to feel that, in the realm of language at least, I am vastly superior to you; and the feeling of superiority—need I say it?—is what puts the lovely curl in the snob's smile.

As a language snob, one finds no shortage of playgrounds upon which to exercise one's snobbery. Hegel reports that we learn from the study of history that no one learns from the study of history. So, we learn from the careful study of language that not many people have ever used language very carefully. Permit me to bring in an old adversary on this subject, that linguist of populist tendency, Professor Bernard Strawman.

"Arguably, you have a case," Strawman, trying to be polite, says.

"Wherever did you find so weak and weakly positioned an adverb as *arguably*, Bernie?" I reply.

"Perhaps," he says, "you don't allow enough leeway for societal pressures on language use."

"In the home of what woebegone sociologist did you ever find so ugly a word as *societal*?" I inquire.

"At this point in time," he replies, "*societal* is a very popular word. What do you have against it?"

"What I have against it, Bernie," I respond, "is that it tends to be used by so many people who also use such phrases as 'at this point in time.' "

Even Bernie Strawman, normally a model of conversational good manners, now sounds a touch petulant: "Wait a minute," he says. "Which are you against: the words or the people who use them? If the former, perhaps you are a man of principle; if the latter, it seems to me you are merely a snob."

To which I reply: "In this matter of language I view myself as a highly principled snob. May I take a moment—an essay, in fact—to explain?"

Let us look more closely at the word *supportive*. (Here you must imagine me picking up the word between my thumb and index finger, holding it as far from my body as possible, a disapproving pucker upon my lips.) At first glance, *supportive* seems harmless enough. At second glance, though, it strikes me as a fake. It is no more than the old words *supporting* or *supported* got up with a new suffix that gives it a psychological and hence high-flown air, rather like getting a letter from someone you used to know from the old neighborhood who, on his stationery, has had Ph.D. printed after his name. To use the word *supportive* is to take a sound enough

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old word and drag it from the solid ground of common usage into the marshlands of abstraction. The net result of this transfer, it seems to me, is not a gain in clarity but only an increase in pretension.

Richard Nixon has made it impossible ever again to say "Let me make one thing perfectly clear," so let me instead be as clear as I can be here and announce that I am not against all new words. While I have the mike, let me also announce that I am of course aware that language is almost ceaselessly changing. Some changes—such as the word "breathalyzer" to measure the drunkenness of drivers—are necessary to accommodate new inventions. Some changes I like just for their rhythm and sound. *Rip-off*, which has been in the language for roughly fifteen years now, seems to me to have earned its way. *Shuck*, a rip-off with an element of bunko to it, seems to me a fine fresh minting. I am all for invention, asking only that it be useful, describe something that really exists, and, if possible (which it often isn't), be fun. For this reason I find myself partial to the recent neologism *wimp*. It seems to me a word in the family of those fine Yiddishisms *nebbish* and *nebbekle* and their spin-off *nerd*. I think of a wimp, in fact, as a Gentile nebbish.

I trust that by now I have established myself as not your run-of-the-mill snob; I prefer, in fact, to think myself a custom-tailored snob. I like what I deem to be good new words. I like to toss in a neologism of my own every now and then, and I like what the linguistically prudish used to call Americanisms. One of the few things I have ever disagreed with Henry James about is his fear, set forth in *The American Scene*, that immigrant groups in the United States would pollute the pure stream of the English language. I think the current in this stream is stronger than James knew. It can carry a great deal before it and still remain fresh. It was, after all, the grandson of an immigrant, H. L. Mencken, who made the English language do one-and-a-half gainers, back flips, and triple somersaults. A. J. Liebling, another scion of the immigranti, as Mencken might have put it, for my money didn't do too shabbily either. But then I have a weakness for people who know how to play language for laughs. I have a taste for the concrete, the colorful, the comic (also, I see, for the alliterative). When the pro-basketball player Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, after dining at the home of a colleague, Julius Irving, was asked by the press if Mrs. Turquoise Irving was a good cook, Mr. Jabbar replied: "Yeah, man, Turquoise can burn." Henry James, I think, was too good-humored not to have enjoyed that.

As a snob, the people I like to lord it over are the quasi-semi-demi-ostensibly educated, B.A., M.S., Ph.D. and degrees beyond. Few things please me more, for example, than to see the novelists Norman Mailer and Joan Didion misuse the word *disinterested*. Or to hear a noted scholar, George F. Kennan, use the word *transpire* as if it were nothing more than a high-toned synonym for *happen*. Or to hear more degreed people than I care to count use *intriguing* as if it meant nothing other than *fascinating*. (Take the verb *to intrigue* away from spies and you leave these fellows practically unemployed.) To give you some notion of how far gone I am, now that it has caught on with the putatively educated classes, I have stopped using the phrase "early on"; when I hear it from others, I think, "Whatsamatter, baby, *early* standing alone not good enough for a swell like you?" And of course I am death on people who use the term "bottom line."

Few things please me more than when to my language snobbery I can join my economic jealousy—I am practically ecstatic, that is, when I hear a highly paid broadcasting journalist commit an egregious error. I watch television news ready to pounce; it is good exercise, for, as a language snob, I get to pounce rather a lot. One of the local anchormen hereabouts—about a $300,000-a-year man, I would estimate—made my day not long ago when, in connection with the Libyan embassy crisis in London, he asked a visiting expert whether this might spell the possibility of a *tête à tête* for Qaddafi. "Coup d'etat, you overpaid moron," I roared, leaping from my couch, "not tête à tête." Or when, during the NCAA basketball tournament, the former coach and current announcer Billy Packer referred to "three or four Achilles' heels" that De Paul University's team had. "Ah, dear boy," I whispered to myself, "one Achilles' heel was quite enough—even for Achilles." But I don't always require major screw-ups such as these. I am satisfied when one of the truly high-priced boys—Dan

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Rather, Tom Brokaw, or Peter Jennings—misuses *decimate*, which means to kill a tenth, or calls something "rather unique," which is akin to being rather pregnant. Do you take my point? Do you also think that what I have written thus far makes for "a good read?" If you do, please clean out your locker, for you're through—I hate the phrase "a good read."

One of the things a language snob learns early in his training is that there is probably no word or phrase that someone of stature doesn't despise. Edward Shils has kept up a running attack against the phrase "check out," as in "check it out." I know many people who hate *authored* as a verb, but I recently read that E. B. White doesn't even like the word *author*. I can never hear or see the word *workshop*, referring to a management seminar or creative writing course, without thinking of Kingsley Amis's line, from his novel *Jake's Thing*, which runs: "If there's one word that sums up everything that's gone wrong since the war, it's Workshop." Legion are the people who loathe the phrase "pick your brain," and I am among their number. Whenever anyone says to me that they would, on a particular subject, like to pick my brain, I always think, "Yes, if I may kick your butt."

"I'd like to pick your brain," is a phrase my friend Dottie uses quite often. Dottie and I go way back. She is a good soul, large-hearted in so many ways. But Dottie is one of those people who seems to absorb whatever language is in the air, and the language that has been in the air in recent years has, I fear, driven my friend Dottie a bit, well, dotty. (Perfectly lovely people sometimes use the most awful language; that they do is, alas, the pebble in the caviar of language snobbery.) Because of language, Dottie's life reminds me of a man whom Keats, in his letters, records meeting at Robert Burns's cottage, whose life, Keats notes, is "fuz, fuzzy, fuzziest."

Dottie has been going through a rough patch in recent years. Among other crises in her life, she has had a painful divorce and two job changes. She explained her divorce to me in something like the following terms. Her husband, she feels, "seemed just to want to do his thing." She no longer knew quite "where he was coming from." He used to be so steady, but, suddenly, he was so "off the wall." She supposed it was in part "a question of life-style," or maybe a "mid-life crisis." When I pressed her for greater clarity, she said: "Whatever." On her last trip to my apartment to pick my brain, her subject was a new prospective boss. She had had three interviews with him and found him rather "flakey."

"What do you mean by 'flakey'?" I asked.

"You know," she said, "he's a bit spacey."

"Spacey?" I asked.

"You know," she said, "like a real flake. I couldn't make out where exactly he was coming from."

Dottie comes ostensibly to pick my brain, but in fact she usually succeeds in scrambling it. When I left her at the door of my apartment, I suggested that she try to get a clearer picture of this man for whom she might soon be working by asking other people in her industry about him. She kissed me on the cheek and, turning to leave, announced, "Whatever."

Whatever!

I have never seen what I think of as the all-purpose, flying "whatever" used as a transition before, as I have just used it above, but then that is what makes it all-purpose. "I love you, I need you, whatever," or so I imagine young men nowadays proposing to their wives-to-be. "Yes, darling, I love you too. I want to have your children, to live out my life with you, whatever," the young woman replies, at which point they fall into each other's arms while across the screen appears not The End but Whatever. Used in this way, *whatever* is simply the word *etcetera* carried to the highest power. But it can also be used in the following way: "I suppose what I really mean is that, given society's current setup, it appears unlikely that one can find fulfilling work as long as the structure of employment is likely to, you know, whatever." Here *whatever* really means "Oh, the hell with it; I can't formulate exactly what I wish to say, but you know what I mean." My problem is that I usually don't know what the person means. What I do know is the utility of a word such as *whatever* to a confused mind, or at any rate a mind that chooses not to struggle with its confusions. It is a very useful word, *whatever*. You can even end paragraphs with it. Whatever.

Whatever may also qualify for the category that the sainted H. W. Fowler, blessed be his

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name, called "meaningless words." Of meaningless words, Fowler wrote:

> Words and phrases are often used in conversation, especially by the young, not as significant terms but rather, so far as they have any purpose at all, as aids of the same kind as are given in writing by punctuation, inverted commas, and underlining. It is a phenomenon perhaps more suitable for the psychologist than for the philologist. Words and phrases so employed change frequently, for they are soon worn out by overwork. Between the wars the most popular were DEFINITELY and *sort of thing*. One may suppose that they originated in a subconscious feeling that there was a need in the one case to emphasize a right word and in the other to apologize for a possibly wrong one. But any meaning they ever had was soon rubbed off them, and they became noises automatically produced.

Fowler also mentions *actually* and *you know* among the crop of meaningless words. (*Incidentally* is another meaningless word Fowler mentions, which, incidentally, reminds me that, a while back, I had a long bout of beginning most of my sentences, at least in conversation, with the phrase "By the way." Everything, in those days, seemed to me "by the way." It takes a big-hearted snob, don't you think, to admit to a small-gauge error.) A few years ago, *basically* was having a good run. "Care for dessert?" "Basically, I don't think I do," is a ridiculous but not unreal example. *You know* has had very long innings, and flourishes today, particularly among athletes. Of Patrick Ewing, the fine center for the Georgetown University basketball team, it has been said that last year he led the nation in *you know*s. It was said, obviously, by someone like me, a language snob.

A language snob's work is never done. Natural feelings of superiority being fleeting, he must maintain his vigilance, staying almost perpetually on the lookout for fresh signs of solecisms and lapsed standards, if only to maintain his desired state of self-elevation. As infantrymen are sent out on missions known as search and destroy, so the language snob is regularly on missions to search and enjoy—to find and delight in the linguistic fatuities and faux pas of his fellows. While there is no shortage of these in the contemporary world, some of course are better than others and provide more profound delight. I wasn't there to hear it, but a friend informs me that he once heard a Chicago politician claim that he "wasn't one to cast asparagus at his opponent." It is not every day that one comes upon such treasure.

Still, the language snob must take his pleasures where he finds them. In bureaucratic prose, for example. Few samples of bureaucratic prose fail to include the verb *implement*, which generally causes me to want to reach for an implement to smash the person who has used it. *Guidelines*, too, has brought many a twinkle to these crowfooted and pouchy eyes. "*Guidelines* is a bastardization," I cry out to the walls. "It comes from *guy lines*, you idiot." No question about it, bureaucratic prose writers need to prioritize, dichotomize, and finalize, at least if they are to be responsive and people-oriented. Is what I say here of any ongoing interest? If so, I shall keep on going.

A language snob must not fear descending to pedantry. I know this language snob doesn't. I have had a good deal of fun, in this regard, watching people misuse the word *whence*, turning it into a tautology by saying or writing "from whence." But I have suffered minor setbacks here. Recently I noted "from whence" in both Shakespeare and Edmund Burke. More recently still, I discovered T. S. Eliot—T. S. bloody Eliot, for God's sake—misusing *presently* to mean "now" or "currently." Shock and dismay is the language snob's lot. Believe me, I don't enjoy feeling superior to Shakespeare, Burke, and Eliot, yet what is a man of serious standards to do?

But a language snob need not confine himself to pedantry. Euphemism always yields a full crop for his scythe—and, like cauliflower, euphemism is available all year round. My very favorite euphemism over the past fifteen or so years has been, without doubt, "student unrest." It was used to refer to the attempt on the part of radical students in the late sixties and early seventies to destroy the universities. "Student unrest" implies a mild crankiness, the antidote for which was perhaps a few good afternoon naps. I like, too, "Due to mature theme viewer discretion advised," which I take to mean "simulated fornication, extreme violence, and filthy language follow—get the kids the hell out of the room." This may seem an idiosyncratic reading, but I understand the word *interdisciplinary*, used by academics, to mean "I deserve a grant." I recall reading a grant proposal for the Na-

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tional Endowment for the Humanities a few years back in which the author wanted a grant for a course that would not only be "cross-curricular" but "interdisciplinary" and "inter-university" as well. I suggested that NEH turn it down because it wasn't interplanetary. None of this parochial stuff for me.

A language snob must also be ready to outlaw words because the wrong people use them. *Charisma* is such a word. It once had a significant meaning, but no longer. "He has charisma," I not long ago heard Bucky Walters, the basketball announcer, say of a player. "He's got that smile." *Gnostic*, at least as used by literary critics, is another word I should like to ban. I have never read a sentence by a literary critic with the word *Gnostic* in it that I have ever understood (except this one). *Syndrome*, too, must go. "This is a syndrome he had foisted on him," I recently heard one politician say of another. *Structure* is another gone goose. On television the other day I heard another politician, one of the zinc-throated orators of our day, affirm: "I have invested in activities that have gone to enhance this total city's overall structure." Does everyone out there know how to enhance a structure? You add a touch of tarragon and soak it in lime juice. While we are cleaning the linguistic closet, let's toss out *learning experience*, which was never any good to begin with. Besides, I have noticed that people who say "learning experience" tend never to learn from experience.

On the subject of experience, it was Walter Pater who invoked us to live intensely for the moment, to seek "not the fruit of experience, but experience itself." But Pater didn't live to see the word *experience* turned into a verb, lucky chap. What would he have made of recent advertisements that ask us to "Experience Yoplait Yogurt," "Experience the St. Regis," "Experience Our 9.6 Interest Rates"? Walter Pater was not notably—how to say it?—a fun person. I am not at all sure he could "wrap his mind around" what has happened to the word *experience*. Although in the passage of his I quoted above he seems to be inviting us to "get in touch with our feelings," he scarcely seems a man to whom one could say, as the people who use *experience* as a verb also tend to say, "Go for it!"

As a language snob, I judge a person less by the cut of his jib than by the grab of his gab. Where the gab has no grab I see a certain mental—not moral—flab. When a prospective buyer of *The London Observer* remarks that he intends to make that paper's editor "toe the line of viability," I make a judgment that is not charitable to him. When I read the phrase, in a book by Alvin Toffler, "decisional environment," not one but both my eyebrows fly up just beyond my receding hairline. When I read, in *The New Yorker*, about a Harvard Law School professor who refers to "a societal role not perceived as particularly helpful," to myself I exclaim, "Et tu, Harvard!" Can you identify with or relate to this? If you can—"identify," "relate"—I want you to draw a final paycheck and be out of here by five o'clock this afternoon. I loathe those words and phrases. You're fired.

"I have never seen a word derive," says the heroine of Renata Adler's novel *Speedboat*. I believe I have seen a word derive, and that word is *life-style*. I recall first coming across the word *life-style* (from the German *Lebensstil*) in Max Weber's essays on social class, some of which I read as an undergraduate. I was immensely impressed with it; on Max Weber, an authentic genius, all words looked good. In those days, I used it myself, slipping it into term papers and conversation whenever possible. (Those were also the days of *ambivalence* and *love-hate*—not the condition and the relationships but the cheap phrases.) Soon I saw *life-style* taken up by advertising agencies and low-grade sociologists. College students next took the word up in the most flyblown way: "Queen Victoria lived a very different life-style than most of her subjects." The word fell into more and more common—and more and more confused—use. Today the word carries something of a philosophical freight: implicit in it is the notion, which I, for one, don't believe, that life has an almost infinite plasticity—change your life-style, change your life, it's as easy as that.

I have come to feel a fine invigorating hatred for the word. Where I could fight against it, I have done so. I have abused authors who use it when I have written about their books. My poor students always receive a slightly squinty-eyed query when the word pops up in their conversation: "*Life-style*—what do you suppose you mean when you say *life-style*?" I ask. But then a few years ago, in

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the course of editing a manuscript by the late Nobel-Prize-winning biologist Max Delbrück, who was a fluent and careful writer of English prose, I came across a reference to "the life-style of the cell." Over the telephone I explained to Professor Delbrück that *life-style* was a word that drove me beyond the confines of distraction and into the country of apoplexy and asked him if I couldn't persuade him to remove it from his manuscript. "I don't like it much myself," he replied, "but I am afraid that it is the word that scientists have given to the patterning of certain cellular activity and that we are stuck with it." So there you have it—living testimony of a word deriving.

Do I, I wonder, begin to seem to you—to put it ever so gently—a touch crazed? Has the cheerful snob that I advertise myself as being begun to seem the beady-eyed fanatic? There is something about caring for language that does not allow for moderation. How can you tell if you care about language? You care, I should say, if it grates upon you to hear the word *impact* used as a verb. Next you begin to care if you see *impact* used to describe anything other than ballistics, car crashes, and wisdom teeth. You care if you find yourself wishing to flee the company of anyone who uses such words as *parenting, coupling, cohabing, husbanding,* or *wiving.* You care if it turns your stomach to see or hear a reference to "the caring professions." You know for certain that you care if the last thing in the world you care to be called is "a caring person."

In recent years language snobbery has suffered a real setback by having become institutionalized. There have always been writers who worried and complained about the state of the English language. Swift, Hazlitt, and Orwell have been among their number. But of late a great many books have been published on the subject. Magazines—*The New York Times Magazine, Esquire, Gentlemen's Quarterly*—have instituted regular columns on the state of the language. Such journalists as Edwin Newman, John Simon, and William Safire—a bit of a falling off here from Swift, Hazlitt, and Orwell—have set up shop as state-of-the-language pundits. By now there are even reverse language snobs loose in the land. Thus Professor Robert Pattison, in *On Literacy,* remarks upon "the dull, pragmatic rationale of established literacy" and writes:

> The same students who resolutely remain in darkness about the niceties of correct English grammar are as capable of intelligence as any previous generation. . . . Months of exercises will not shake their nonchalance about commas, but few are likely to misspell the name Led Zeppelin.

What a shame that there isn't an antonym for the phrase "Right on!"

Mention of the state-of-the-language pundits brings to mind Lionel Trilling, who once wrote: "I find righteous denunciations of the present state of language no less dismaying than the present state of the language." Yet, I have to wonder, is what I have been doing here not also righteous? Perhaps it is, but there does remain the less than cheery state of the language. Then, too, I take some small pride in the fact that I am for the most part attacking my own class. Nearly thirty years ago, in *Noblesse Oblige* (1956), Nancy Mitford caused a great stir by pointing out the distinction in their use of language between U and non-U people—U people being those who had gone to university. This distinction, as I recall, had to do almost exclusively with social class, and spoke very little, if at all, to the quality of language used by either group. Today, though, it is people who have been to university who make the most gnawing depredations into the clarity and cleanliness of language. I cannot, for example, imagine any supposedly uneducated person using the word *supportive,* except possibly about his jockstrap. Who but a university student or graduate would refer to her mother as a "role model," or talk about "the gender gap," or say she wishes "to dialogue" with me? (I make it a rule never "to dialogue"; I find it gets in the way of serious conversation.) Who but a U person would fall back on so foggy a word as *values*? Wesleyan University, I note, has a course entitled "Touchstones of Western Values," and a current Democratic presidential candidate has said, "Values lead to values." See ya later, obfuscator.

With the possible exception of politicians, bureaucrats, professors with weak ideas, and those in other professions and trades where charlatanry is requisite, few are the people who have a real taste for obfuscatory lan-

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guage. Doubtless Nietzsche was correct when he said that "general is the need for new jingling words, which shall make life noisy and festive." Yet language is still far and away the best tool we have for deceiving ourselves. When a famous ecologist writes that, if we are to save the earth, "we must enter into a creative association with our environment," I don't think the man is a knave or even a liar; I do, though, think, perhaps unbeknownst to himself, that he is embarked on the mental equivalent of whistling Dixie. When a young mother takes an active hand in a political campaign because she wants "this country to be a positive experience for my son," I do not impugn her sincerity, only her clarity. Was Russia a positive experience for Tolstoy, Germany for Bismarck, France for Proust? Do countries supply "positive experience"? The thought makes one wonder whether this young mother isn't searching for something that is not available.

So the language snob persists, lorgnette held high. Sometimes he looks quite as much at the people who use them as at the words themselves. I have never, for instance, met a professor in the humanities who called himself or herself a "humanist," without irony, whom I didn't dislike. I am extremely wary of people who go in for botanical metaphors in a big way to describe psychological states. "I feel myself growing," they will say. Or: "It has been a growthful experience." To the basic botanical metaphor of growth, further metaphors are stitched in. Abra Anderson, a Rockefeller granddaughter and a millionairess who lives in Chicago, recently told a journalist:

> Right now I don't know where I am, except that I feel everything else is finished. The apartment's finished, I've got a wonderful man, my kids are fine, the bills are paid, the charities are OK. And I'm just repotting myself.

Repotting? Hmm. Sounds like a lot of fertilizer to me.

Certain words such as *growth* seem to have a built-in squishiness; they grow soft at the touch. But, as any language snob will be pleased to tell you, good solid words, if sedulously misused, can lose their solidity, too. The word *honest* applied to art—and for a long stretch it was the key word of praise for works of architecture—always merits suspicion. *Excellence* is nowadays all but drained of meaning, so often has it been applied to things that are scarcely mediocre. The word *complete,* when used to describe collections of one or another kind of writing, usually turns out to mean merely "quite a bit of." *Literally,* in so many current usages, doesn't mean "literally"; it's literally a scandal, so to speak. "Ballpark figure" is a nice fairly new phrase meaning "rough approximation" (such as the estimates of attendance at a ball game), but it sometimes seems, to this language snob at any rate, as if we are entering the era of ballpark language, where words are used approximately; they mean only roughly what we think they mean.

My biases ought by now to be clear; so, too, my snobbery. But I earlier referred to myself as a principled snob. Wherein, you may about now be wondering, lie my principles? All right, turn down the houselights, boys, give me the strong spotlight and a drumroll, here they are: take out after all language that is pretentious and imprecise, under-educated and over-intellectualized. Question all language that says more than it means, that leaves the ground but does not really fly. Question authority only after you have first seriously consulted it; it isn't always as stupid as it looks. Never forget that today's hot new phrase becomes tomorrow's cold dead cliché. (What will we do, a writer in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* asks, "when the Baby Boomers get to Golden Pond?") Know in advance that the fight for careful language is probably a losing one, but at the same time don't allow this knowledge to take the edge off your appetite for battle. The war may be lost, yet the skirmishes are still worth waging. Recall the words of that grand snob, Proust's Baron de Charlus: "I have always honored the defenders of grammar and logic. We realize fifty years later that they have averted serious dangers."

Hey, you know, I guess that some of you think I'm doing a number on you. If you do, check it out. C'mon over. I'd like your input. The old lady'll put out some peanuts, pretzels maybe—you know, fun food. We'll break out a few tall cool ones. See if you think I've really gone flakey on this language thing. I think

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you'll find I'm pretty viable and am playing well within myself. We'll do some zero-based thinking, look at it in terms of worst-case and in terms of best-case thinking—in terms of the process itself. Maybe, when you come right down to it, it's a policy question. It's an intriguing bit. Arguably, it's worth arguing about. I haven't gone so far beyond the wall as to be above a little insightful feedback. But I'd better knock off, you know, because I've come, as they used to say in the bad old days, to the bottom line—and when I say bottom line, daddy, I mean bottom line. Out of sight. Awesome. Really.

For a Lost Watch

ROBIN SHECTMAN

She meant to take the broken watch
to the jeweller. Wrapped in a Kleenex
to ward off the scrape of nail files,
car keys, coins in her purse, it escaped,
like a figure in Greek tragedy,
working always toward some unknown purpose.
One day, not recognizing it,
she threw it out.

Now a large blue garbage truck
pulls into the dump, deposits a layer
of eggshells, tea leaves, tin cans,
and the Bulova her mother gave her,
still in its flowered, crumpled tissue.
Cans rust, the kitchen refuse turns to earth,
all things seek elemental simplicity.
Alone in the field, her watch maintains
its golden case, its jewelled movement,
and all we know about time.

ROBIN SHECTMAN is an editor for the *Altadena Review*. Her poems have appeared in the *Blue Unicorn*, the *California Quarterly*, and *Yankee*.

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Democracy and Distrust

A Lesson from Thucydides

CLIFFORD ORWIN

IF THERE IS ONE THING for which every democracy yearns, it is more democracy. Today we often hear that "more democracy" means, above all, direct or participatory democracy, in place of the representative sort. Participation figures as a major theme in democratic theory and spurs dreams of a post-liberal world transfigured by the experience of political community.

The political community par excellence was the polis, or ancient city. For at least eight centuries now its memory has fired Western republicanism. Today many still look to it as a model of direct democracy. Not a sufficient model, surely, but one defective primarily in the respects in which it, too, fell short of full democracy: in holding slaves, for instance, or excluding women, or failing to abolish class distinctions. The credit for its allure here and now belongs above all to Hannah Arendt. She more than anyone popularized the polis as the definitive "public space" and interpreted the aspiration to recreate it as the "lost treasure" of the modern revolutionary tradition. She thus revitalized the study of the ancient city from a democratic leftist perspective.

It is this perspective that I wish to question here. In particular I will challenge the view, widespread among democratic theorists, that as "community" requires "participation," so "participation" breeds "community." Many of the advocates of participation today view it as "transformative." They see it not merely as a better or the only legitimate way of going about addressing substantive political problems, but as itself the solution to most of our nagging discontents. To hear the participationists tell it, in fact, our ills seem to be of two sorts: those that must be cured if participation is to be "meaningful," and those that meaningful participation will cure. These latter include those sentiments of distrust, powerlessness, and "alienation" so rampant in modern democratic societies. Liberty, equality, fraternity, or community: these

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are divined to inhere in the experience of political participation itself.

It is the experience of political participation that I explore in this essay. This I do by means of a single example drawn from the historian Thucydides. An example is rarely decisive. It can be suggestive, however, and this one is unusually so. For of the debates preserved for us by ancient writers who knew participatory politics firsthand, this is the only one that features a discussion about discussion. It offers us that rarity, a political deliberation that confronts the question of the limits of political deliberation.

II

The episode that I have in mind, the so-called Mytilenian debate, is one of the most dramatic in Thucydides (3.36ff.). (Here, as throughout, references follow the standard form of citation of Thucydides by book and chapter [paragraph]. Translations are mine; the best generally available one is that of Crawley in the Modern Library.) Mytilene was an ally of Athens, which revolted from her at the height of the Peloponnesian War and in collusion with the Spartan enemy. Her intention had been to instigate a general rising of the subject allies and so to cost Athens the war—this despite the fact that Athens had always treated her exceptionally well. Having with much trouble suppressed the revolt, the Athenians in their anger resolved to put to death not only the ringleaders but every adult male Mytilenian and to sell the women and children as slaves (3.36).

The debate that Thucydides recreates is a reconsideration of this original decision. We owe it to the spontaneous qualms of the Athenian people. In the cold light of the morning after, they awaken to the reflection that it was "savage and monstrous . . . to destroy a whole city rather than the guilty." There is no time to lose: a ship is already on the way to Mytilene to enforce the decree. Even now it may be too late to overtake it.

The reconsideration proceeds. Its foremost opponent is Cleon, "the most violent of the citizens and at that time by far the most persuasive with the people." Having carried the motion of the previous day, he most violently and persuasively defends it in the present debate. His chief adversary, now as in the first debate, is the otherwise unknown Diodotus. It is only their two speeches that Thucydides gives us. If their first go-round was no contest, this one proves closer than we would wish.

Cleon's speech is rambling, vehement, and contradictory. We may best understand it as a masterpiece of populism. Populism begins with the faith that whatever is rooted in the people is wholesome, while

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whatever is alien to them is corrupt. Particularly suspect are fancy words and big thoughts. Populism so conceived is a lasting feature of democratic politics. In appealing to it Cleon overlays the issue of Mytilene with that of the loyalty of those who are soft on Mytilene. He thus foments a spirit of suspicion and mistrust, recalling—but worse than—McCarthyism in America.

Cleon begins with an attack on his listeners that is an even sharper one on his rivals (3.37). He declares that he has often reflected, and never more than now, on the incapacity of democracies for empire. Imbued as Athenians are with the trust and openness that prevail among themselves, they thoughtlessly extend these qualities to the sphere of foreign affairs as well, forgetting that their empire is a tyranny and their subject allies resentful conspirators.

We are not concerned here with Cleon's presentation of the Athenian empire. We must note, however, his characterization of the spirit of Athenian domestic life. Like much else in his speeches, it is pilfered from his immediate predecessor as leader of the Athenian people, Pericles. In the famous funeral oration that Thucydides ascribes to him, Pericles had praised the Athenians for the openness and lack of rancor that graced their common life (2.37). In Cleon's mouth, however, this becomes something not entirely praiseworthy. For trust is called for only where it is merited. And Cleon's point is that many whom the Athenians trust, at home as well as abroad, are nothing short of traitors.

In praising the law, and citizens who defer to its wisdom from their own, Cleon strikes a note that seems not Athenian but Spartan. In fact he here echoes an earlier speech by the decent Spartan king Archidamus (1.84). The echo falls flat, however, for the laws of Sparta, attributed to the divine Lycurgus, were thought to have been in place and unchanged for four hundred years, while the Mytilenian decree has passed yesterday at the urging of Cleon. Cleon's aim in eulogizing law is simply to discredit deliberation, by placing the result of yesterday's discussion beyond any further discussion. His praise of law thus furthers his populist attack on fast talkers.

In heaping suspicion on the orators, Cleon interprets a distinction observable in every deliberative body. It is that between those who take the lead in participating and those who are more or less content to follow, between those who advise and those who consent. This distinction between leaders and followers lends itself to several interpretations. Pericles again, in the funeral oration, had praised Athens for her unique ability to combine deliberation with daring, to "seek wisdom without softness." Her citizens, if not all competent to advise, were at least all competent to pass on conflicting advice (2.20). Cleon, however,

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describing the same city a mere three years later, presents deliberation as misleading rather than enlightening, for he recasts the distinction between speakers and listeners as that between "politicians" and "people." The former speak for reputation, and for no other reason—except where they happen to have been bribed to do so. Wit and learning dwell with the speakers; judgment and virtue with the people. As for Cleon, this speaker against speaking, he must be the strong, noisy type, the spokesman for that silent majority who have too much sense to speak.

It is, then, not only when extended to her allies that the trust prevailing at Athens is misplaced. By now, however, we have to wonder about all of this alleged trustfulness. It is, after all, *distrustful* men whom it pays to chastise for being too trusting. In democracy as Cleon knows and lives it, it is above all from distrust of others that you forge trust in yourself; that is what populism is all about.

Cleon's criticism of the people is palatable to them initially because it implies a paean to their virtues and blames them only for trusting those so much less trustworthy than themselves. But Cleon is no mere flatterer. He now proceeds to blast the people for *their* untrustworthiness. That corruption from which only a Cleon can save them proves in the end to be their own.

For the rhetorical circus at Athens is not confined to the rings.

> For you excel at being deceived by novel arguments and at ignoring those of proven worth, and are slaves of each new absurdity and disdainers of everything familiar. What each of you wishes most of all is that he could be a speaker himself, or, if he cannot, to compete with those who do say these sorts of things by seeming not to lag behind them in wit, but to praise a saying even before it is spoken. You are as quick to anticipate what is said as you are slow to foresee its results. . . . To conclude, you are addicted to the pleasure of listening, and resemble those attending the shows of sophists rather than men deliberating in matters of state (3.38).

It is not the politicians who corrupt the people, but almost the other way around. The speakers speak as they do because the listeners are what they are. The problem is not one of apathy: the people attend to the debates with zeal. The problem is rather their zeal. Just like the speakers—so Cleon claims—the people live to shine in the public sphere, to stand out from the crowd in the broad daylight of deliberation. They, too, therefore seize politics as a chance to display their wit: if they cannot shine as performers, they want to look like fans in the know. It is not their innocence so much as their vanity that enslaves them to the orators. If private-spiritedness is what distinguishes the politicians from

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the people, then Athens, as Cleon presents it, has no people, only politicians.

There is a dramatic likeness, and a no less dramatic difference, between Cleon's portrait of Athens and that of Pericles in his funeral oration (2.43). Both present the Athenian as freely dedicating his life to renown. For Pericles, however, this dedication unites the citizens, lifting them above all base concerns in common devotion to the public good. The renown to which they aspire is undying fame as Athenians, citizens of the noblest, strongest, freest society ever. Pursuit of fame thus seals wholehearted devotion to Athens.

That to which Pericles had exhorted, Cleon proclaims as a fact: to be an Athenian is to be devoted to fame. It is, however, a fact to be deplored. For the Athenian is a mere glory hound; there is nothing sublime in his vocation. He aspires not to undying fame but merely to glitter for the moment. His yen for celebrity, far from underwriting devotion to the city, spends itself in jockeying for position within it. It affords no basis for mutual trust, but rather makes all trust impossible, except perhaps in rogues by fools. Such a vision of democracy casts doubt on more than its capacity for empire.

But are we to take all this seriously? Cleon has his reasons for speaking as he does, and providing posterity with an accurate account of Athenian politics is not among them. His concern is to persuade his listeners and, to that end, to badger them. Still, if we cannot presume his veracity, we must respect his astuteness: he is the most effective speaker in Athens. And much of what he says about the deliberative process squares with what he must think about it—in order for it to make rhetorical sense that he says what he does.

When, for instance, Cleon harangues the people as every one a celebrity manqué, he could not expect the barb to wound unless he thought it on target. Such an interpretation of the people, moreover, would afford a plausible explanation of that mood of theirs on which Cleon's rhetoric depends absolutely, their deep distrust of those who would lead them. At the root of this distrust would lie a resentment born as much of envy as of disillusionment. Cleon is confident that in their hearts the people will accept this reprimand and, what is more, that they will thank him for it. ("We needed that: we have been much too trusting.") In this way their shame at having strayed from him will help ease their qualms over Mytilene.

For the people as Cleon presents them, there is no salvation but through Cleon. They are not, in the end, more capable of managing affairs than the clever; instead they are doomed to be managed by the clever. If Cleon establishes his kinship with them by articulating their

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distrust of others, he must establish their need of him by appealing to their distrust of themselves.

As for Cleon's position on Mytilene, I will note it only briefly. Firing their hatred of their foreign foes just as of his domestic ones, he appeals now to the Athenians' fear and now to their vengefulness, two passions that unite in supporting his decree of extirpation.

III

The speech of Diodotus begins with a staunch defense of deliberation as the only means of reaching sound decisions (3.42). Those who would deny this, he insists, are fools or (more likely) rogues, who, "wishing to persuade of something disgraceful and doubting their ability to speak well in a base cause, . . . slander well so as to cow both their opponents and their listeners." Worst of all, he contends, are those who accuse (as Cleon has done) their adversaries of corruption. For then these adversaries, even should they prevail, are suspect and, should they fail, are reputed to be not only unintelligent, but unjust. "And such goings-on are no favor to the city, for fear deprives it of advisers."

Diodotus is commonly taken for the first recorded civil libertarian. He certainly sounds like one in stressing the blessings to society of free and fearless public debate. Yet the noted scholar A. W. Gomme could sense something in Diodotus's position which recalled that of Cleon: Diodotus in fact, according to Gomme, "comes perilously close to questioning the value of free debate." That is an understatement. Diodotus's defense of deliberation against those who would crimp it is highly misleading: it is his way of trying to crimp it.

Let us begin with the point of agreement between Diodotus and our civil libertarians. It is that deliberation is indispensable for unearthing useful truths. The difference between Diodotus and, say, J. S. Mill is over the conditions favorable to free deliberation. By a free deliberation we mean one unhampered by considerations other than those of reason: what deliberation must be freed from is the entrenched power of the unreasonable. Mill argues for effecting this by lifting almost all restraints on speech. Truth can and will triumph only through the unbridled clash of opinions. Speech is therefore to be restricted only insofar as it presents a clear and present danger to life or property. The way to the ever-less-abridged truth lies through unabridged speech.

Diodotus, however, begins where our civil libertarians leave off, with ostensibly free public discussion. He shows how the dynamic of such discussion inevitably poses a clear and present danger of its own—to the cause of truth itself.

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The problem, as will appear from the lines of his speech already cited, is that so-called free debate proves a contradiction in terms. There is, Diodotus suggests, a Gresham's law of speakers: unless the bad are silenced, they will drive out the good. They will do so by fomenting distrust; by making the good look so bad that they despair of persuading of their goodness. "The prestige of Diodotus cannot well exist with that of Cleon," wrote Leo Strauss. The deliberative marketplace is unfree because it is bounded by considerations of trust, which markedly diverge from those of reason.

Diodotus suggests, however, that we can at least imagine a radical change in this state of things. "[The city] would prosper best if the citizens of this sort that it contains [i.e., those who intimidate by *slandering] were incapable of speaking.*" *This sounds very like a prayer,* for who has ever heard of a city in which the ability to speak deserted whoever would have abused it? And given that Heaven is unlikely thus to provide for the city, is there nothing that it can do for itself? In fact Diodotus suggests that there is.

> As for the good citizen, he ought not intimidate those who speak against him, but to show himself a better speaker on the up and up; and while the moderate city will not confer additional honor on the man who advises it well, neither should it detract from what he already has, and as for him whose judgment does not happen to prevail, not only ought it not punish him; it should not even show him any disrespect. For then it would happen least that a successful speaker, in hopes of achieving still greater esteem, would speak against his better judgment and in order to please, and that an unsuccessful one would resort to these same means, he too aiming to please, so as to court the multitude (3.42).

The course prescribed to citizens here must wait on the adoption of that prescribed to the city. For high-minded abstention from slander has proved no match for indulgence in it, or how is it that the bad citizens have managed to silence the good ones? Speaking no evil, then, cannot, under present conditions, define the part of even the best citizen, who by practicing it would endanger himself without thereby benefiting the city. (Diodotus, as will appear, is very far from practicing it.) At most, then, Diodotus is indicating how the good citizen would speak if all speakers were good citizens—that is, if the city somehow deterred bad citizens from speaking. That, as it happens, is the aim of the reform that Diodotus suggests to the city.

With Diodotus's proposed reform of the city, we reach the heart of his presentation. He offers it as dryly as if it were an amendment to the local Rules of Order. Upon reflection, however, it implies a radical transformation of political life. In fact it is utopian, by which I mean that it offers

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a spurious solution that serves to clarify a genuine problem. Here that problem is nothing less than the central one of deliberation itself, the unequal wisdom and justice of the deliberators.

There are two reasons why we must regard Diodotus's proposal as utopian. The first is the downright impossibility of putting it into use. Anyone with experience of deliberative bodies knows that to enact someone's advice *is* to honor him: the honor lies in the enactment. Most assemblies, indeed, observe a Diodotean etiquette: every member is equally the "honorable" (even the "distinguished") solon from wherever. This cannot obscure the fact that in every forum, when some rise to speak, the mind wanders, while of others it attends to every word. Inevitably, to persuade someone is to gain repute with him and to fail to persuade him is to lose it. The habitually persuasive enjoy great repute (which in turn enhances their persuasiveness), while those who go always unheeded get none. This is not a matter of positive law, and no law or usage can hope to oppose it.

As for tangible political honors, these are primarily offices or positions of trust and responsibility. We would be crazy not to distribute them according to perceived integrity and wisdom. Yet nothing so confirms our good opinion of someone in these regards as that we regularly follow his advice. It is, indeed, as successful speakers that most men first attract political notice and that all politicians whosoever must retain it. In this respect as in the preceding, then, it proves beyond the pale of human possibility to deny all incentive to successful speaking.

The second sense in which the proposal is utopian is this: even if it were feasible, it must prove ineffective. There are only two kinds of societies: those for which this reform would be superfluous, and those for which it would be futile. It would be superfluous for the wise society, and futile for all others.

The wise society would see through Cleons and so would not need this means of deterring them. Having convinced no one, they would soon subside. Such a society, in deliberating—it would be like that city sketched by Pericles in which all listeners were fully competent to judge all speakers—could always be counted on to distinguish the wheat from the chaff. It would therefore be eager to solicit the advice even of those who spoke for the sake of reputation only—for the only way to impress it would be to advise it wisely.

Diodotus's proposal is relevant, then, only to unwise societies. This does not seem a major concession, for these include all actual societies that are or have been. We recall that Diodotus has described the city that would proceed as he advises not as a "wise" one but as a "moderate" one. It is moderate precisely in confessing its unwisdom, in seeking

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to deter unwise advice that it knows might persuade it if given.

On reflection, however, this "moderate" city proves an impossible halfway house. The same lack of perfect deliberative wisdom that necessitates such moderation would necessarily undo it. Let us suppose that a society, by refraining from honoring successful speakers and dishonoring unsuccessful ones, succeeded in silencing the merely honor-loving while drawing out those with pure intentions. Such a society would still have to pass on the conflicting advice before it. (We can hardly assume that all of its advisers would agree, however honorable their intentions in disagreeing might now be.) The "moderate" city, however, insofar as it fell short of wisdom itself and was therefore unable to recognize it infallibly in others, would inevitably fall back on preferring the advice of speakers it trusted. But to trust a speaker is, as we have seen, to honor him. Speakers craving honor would thus regain their incentive to speak—and to do so persuasively rather than wisely wherever the two diverged. In short, we would be back at square one. Society would be swayed by considerations of trust that it mistook for those of reason, and speakers would find some way of slipping these into the debate. They would have to—and this would be as true of the wise, patriotic speakers as of others.

For so long, then, as audiences fall short of wisdom—for so long, in other words, as they are in need of advice—wisdom will be neither sufficient nor necessary to a given speaker's success at persuading them. That is the point of Diodotus's utopian suggestion, and its ramifications are very great, both for the debate at hand and for our understanding of democracy.

The trouble with the Athenians, moreover, is not just that they cannot always recognize good advice.

> What is more, if we so much as suspect someone of being out for gain, who all the same gives the best advice, we will, from envy based on the questionable assumption of his gain, rob the city of that which is clearly advantageous for it.

Even where advice seems good in its own right, trust in the speaker must supplement it. We do not trust even the seemingly good advice of someone whom we distrust. Instead we suspect that something is fishy: we would rather risk ignoring good advice than have anyone put anything over on us.

From this it follows that plain good advice, in the absence of whatever it takes to foster trust, remains at the mercy of the calumnies of opposing speakers. Diodotus's advice about Mytilene, however beneficial to Athens, cannot prevail amidst suspicions that he speaks disloy-

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ally, and nothing in the advice itself can possibly suffice to dispel such suspicions. Because candor is not transparent, candor alone is never enough to lay to rest suspicions of craft. Only craft can do that, by contriving the semblance of candor.

It is likewise considerations of trust that explain the most astounding stroke in Diodotus's speech, his explicit avowal of the necessity of deception in political life.

> And thus has it come to pass that good advice forthrightly spoken is no less suspect than bad, so that just as someone wishing to persuade of the most dreadful measures must win over the multitude through deception, so a man whose proposals are the very best must lie in order to get himself trusted.

You cannot persuade the city for well or ill unless you deceive it: this amounts to an admission that Diodotus is trying to deceive the city. As such it seems ill suited to dispel the distrust of him stirred up by Cleon. Such, however, must be its intention: to convey a frankness so amazing as to persuade of the honesty of the speaker. It is hard to credit the lack of candor of anyone who is so candid about it.

It is also important, of course, here as throughout Diodotus's discussion of deliberation, that he describes the situation that confronts him in such denunciatory tones. He therefore seems, as Cleon had, to be demanding of the people that they mend their ways and at last give simple honesty a hearing. He presents the way things are as so far short of what they ought to be that we are unlikely to notice that he denounces the way of the world as a means of succeeding according to it. His proclamation of his deceit thus goes as unpunished as his slur of Cleon did.

Diodotus concludes this part of the speech with one last suggestion as to how the people might decide things more sensibly (3.43). They could do so if, when matters turned out badly, they would blame themselves as much as they blame the speaker whose advice they had accepted. Perhaps then they might decide more carefully in the first place. As the adviser runs all the risks, so, on top of everything else, he bears the burden of providing what the outcome will confirm as good advice. In the long run, at least, the people learn whose advice they should have taken; because they take the long view only in hindsight, their erstwhile leader had better do so in advance. Deceit may be necessary, but is surely not sufficient, for abiding success in politics: for that, it must serve to persuade of good advice rather than bad.

The nature of Diodotus's deception? He commits at least two deceptions, both of which help to clarify just why he holds deception necessary. The first is that in assailing Cleon he stoops to the very tactics

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that he declares unworthy of a good citizen. For, in the course of blaming Cleon for maligning the integrity of his opponents, he maligns Cleon's integrity. In presenting such imputations of corruption as prima facie evidence of the corruption of the accuser, he manifestly engages in them—and would thus seem to convict himself of corruption. That he appears to get away with this attests not to his probity but to his cleverness: to sow distrust of someone for sowing distrust is the most ingenious way of sowing distrust of someone. (Think of Joseph Welch's famous deflation of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy during the Army-McCarthy hearings for impugning the integrity of one of Welch's legal associates. ["Has it finally come to this? Have you no shame, sir?" etc.] Welch simply outsmarted McCarthy, blackening his reputation [and assuring his own] while [and by] deploring the blackening of reputation. Or consider Shakespeare's Mark Antony, whose emphatic avowal that Caesar's assassins are honorable men permits him to deprive them of that reputation without cost to his own.)

Whatever Diodotus may preach, in practice he holds at most that Cleons should not malign Diodotuses. He also shows us, however, why they would be fools to desist—as opposed to merely adopting his own subtler and more effective tactics. Considerations of trust shape and limit all deliberation, and in practice Diodotus agrees with Cleon that trust accrues to those who are best at exploiting distrust.

Diodotus further agrees with Cleon that trustworthy politicians are few, Cleon being the case in point. Given that trust is paramount, that it is deserved even more rarely than it is bestowed, and that it is therefore very often misplaced, a timely redirection of it may prove of some benefit to society. Such a redirection commonly depends on fighting fire with fire. Aspersions are too important to be left to the unscrupulous.

This brings us to the second of Diodotus's deceptions. Like the first, it has succeeded not only with the Athenians but with most of the commentators. In turning to the question of Mytilene and whether the decree should be repealed, Diodotus loudly declares that though he proves the Mytilenians to be ever so guilty, he will not for that reason call for their deaths, unless this were also expedient; nor if he shows that they have some claim to pardon, will he bid the Athenians spare them, were it not for the good of Athens to do so (3.44). Cleon has argued from expediency and justice both; Diodotus rejects concern with justice as a luxury Athens can ill afford. He thus appears to have snatched the low ground from the too high-minded Cleon: his argument for sparing Mytilene is more ruthless than Cleon's for annihilating it.

In fact, however, every stage of Diodotus's stated appeal to expediency conveys a surreptitious appeal to justice. If he presents himself as

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harsher than Cleon to an audience once again hardened by Cleon, that is the price of his gaining a hearing—that is, of gaining their trust. His speech is a masterpiece of democratic statesmanship, an enduring example of how to appeal to a people's better selves.

Even so, the vote is very close: Cleon has persuaded more people than Diodotus has succeeded in persuading back. Still, the people do repeal the decree, thus ratifying their repentance. A second ship hastens to overtake the first. It does so just barely and only because the first crew of rowers, overtaken by the same second thoughts as the Athenian people generally, has loitered on its "horrid errand" (3.49). Were it not for their susceptibility to Cleons, the people would have less need of Diodotuses.

IV

Distrust of their leaders, aggravated by a fear of being too trusting of them, mingled with a longing for a leader whom they can trust. Such, according to both our speakers, is the natural temper of a democratic people. Hence the permanent necessity—even in direct democracies where decisions are in the hands of the people assembled—of what we might call image politics. The people give a hearing only to opinions of speakers they trust; their trust then does not issue from any sort of careful hearing. It follows that they are often mistaken. Participation educates, no doubt about it, but one of the things that it teaches the people is to distrust politicians, and so to doubt their own judgment, and so to distrust politicians yet more. Distrust is therefore an inevitable inconvenience of democracy.

The rift between the people and the politicians cannot be healed. At best it can be patched by a politician unusually artful at commanding trust. Pericles comes to mind, as do, closer to home, Andrew Jackson and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. As these very instances confirm, however, the royal road to popular trust commonly lies through playing on existing distrust, whether of politicians as a class or of other presumed enemies of the people ("economic royalists," for instance). As for especially fervent bonds between peoples and leaders, these draw more often than not on the special fervor of some popular resentment.

Not that I mean to minimize the differences between ancient and modern, participatory and representative democracy. It is just that the prevalence of distrust happens to be one of the similarities. Such distrust is in no sense peculiar to modern representative systems. In fact these latter comprise a response to the problems posed by popular distrust, one that concedes the malaise while working to allay the symptoms.

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Constitutional government represents an attempt at a nonpopulist democracy. It seeks to secure the loyalty of the leaders to the people, while sheltering them from merely temporary vicissitudes of popular opinion. The institutions that serve these ends—the whole machinery of representative democracy—foster a far greater distance between leaders and people than any known to direct democracy. To the leaders, they grant longish terms and thereby a longish leash; to the people, merely a longish wait. As for that large diverse society or "extended sphere" which is crucial to the success of modern republicanism (compare Madison's Federalist Ten), it works to disperse both leaders and led among a vast swirl of contending particular interests.

All these conditions can only deepen that popular "alienation" from politicians which would exist even without them. They also help, however, to keep it to a low simmer. Having elected representatives to govern us, we immerse ourselves in our private affairs. Our distrust we nurse until the next election, that terrible if bloodless day of popular wrath. Then we must decide for some years to come whether to renew or withdraw the trust that we bestowed on the incumbent some years ago. Thus do our institutions nudge us toward that responsible longer view of our leaders which Diodotus identifies as the one best hope for the success of democracy. The obstacle, as in his day, is populism. Under current conditions it expresses itself as a demand for shortcuts, by which the popular will of the moment can burst its institutional bounds. Even within those bounds, our leaders are prone to champion, as individuals, the distrust that we harbor against them collectively: the typical legislator, according to Richard F. Fenno, "runs for Congress by running against Congress." Distrust percolates, and life goes on.

All of which goes, of course, only for *successful* representative democracies. But then there has never been a successful direct democracy. It is worth considering why not. Many today yearn for community, political or otherwise, as something of which we enjoy much too little. They tend not to reflect on whether enough might not prove to be too much, and whether direct self-government might not aggravate some ills that we thoughtlessly ascribe to our lack of it. One such ill, I have suggested, is the interplay of popular distrust and the willingness of demagogues to exploit it. This dynamic is intrinsic to democracy as such and stands to puncture every rosy dream of democratic community. You read it first in Thucydides.

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The Lives of Penguins

Amy Clampitt

How is it these quilled milk-bottle
doorstops, straitjacketed in blubber,
without either knees or elbows, that
have to sleep standing, still seem
so hilarious a reflection of *us*, the
spoiled rich kids of natural history,
that notwithstanding our scant fondness
for others of our kind, we do love penguins?
They make us feel good about something,
and whatever it is, we've got to
look into it, we've got to have it.

So off go our spies into the daylong
dark of the Antarctic winter
to eavesdrop on what they do there—
foodless, fretful, shuffling to balance
an egg between foot and paunch until it hatches.
Shrug off that adventure as lunatic
or condemn it as invasion of privacy,
you'll find us at the penguinarium
staring rapt as they take their heartwarming
pratfalls on the ice, give vent to
gusts of head-shaking enmity, or stand
caricaturing the pathos of crowds
in wait for something or other
that never arrives—but that clearly,
whatever it is, is not us.

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About us they know nothing. If, in
their innocence, they even see us,
it's as part of the general impediment
that curves round them, or at best
as a sort of hall tree with buckets
signifying fish. Harmless to anything
other than the fish they dine on,
knowing harm in the shape of a cave-mawed
whale, or a seal with spots like the leopard
they never heard of, it's doubtful
they know us enough to have discerned
the harm we secrete like a hormone,
or as whales do ambergris.

What the penguin intends as we watch it
toboggan and plunge into that fishless
tank, we can't think. Once our reckless
predilections have taken over, transforming
clown-mannikin into torpedo, endowing
blubber with the bliss of bombs
en route, we're too busy applauding
the speed, we're too busy feeling
good, in spite of ourselves, about multiple
independently targeted projectiles.

✪ AMY CLAMPITT is the author of a book of poems entitled *The Kingfisher*. Her second collection, *What the Light Was Like*, will be published by Knopf in 1985.

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Sparrows

LUCY SHAWGO

Proudly in an act of will I wake up
While only scrapings of sparrow feet
Along the gutters of the roof are heard.
I break this still before the sun
With coldest water, toweling hard;
And then I press the door crack
For the even breath of calm
I hope for from my father's room.
The man has walked the nights out
Ever since she, straight-backed and sure,
Slabbing the bacon thick,
While the others of the house lay yet in quiet,
Stopped moving with the sparrow sounds.
I wander her kitchen now unsteadily,
Not certain the bread will rise
Or the bacon crisp enough;
And when he sits, stirring the bitter coffee,
Hands awkward in their grief,
I push the bread aside
And listen with something close to anger,
As the sparrows belly from the roof,
Veering free into the sun.

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Inventing the Shtetl

RUTH GAY

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, remarkable for its invention of the apparatus of the modern world—drains and trains, engines and electric lights—was not behindhand in also inventing many of the traditions that make contemporary Europe seem so picturesque today. Pugin and Viollet Le Duc created a new Middle Ages, the German bourgeoisie costumed the peasantry, and the English enjoyed a spectacular success in inventing ceremonials on a grand scale for its royalty. The Jews from Eastern Europe have taken a little longer, but they, too, in the last half century have created an idealized past for the shtetl—the Jewish village of Eastern Europe—which now shares with the products of the nineteenth-century imagination the charms of a brightly simple reconstruction animated by highly stylized figures and rituals.

The shtetl, in fact, has been invented twice, once in the eighteenth century by administrative decree, which gave it corporeal being, and again in the twentieth century, to serve as a consolation to American Jews. Before the shtetl had been reinvented in America, Jewish life had a less affirmative quality than it has now assumed. As it was related in the old country, Jewish history was a succession of persecutions and dispersions. From Babylonia, to the destruction of the Temple, to the martyrdom of the Crusades, to the expulsion from Spain, to the pogroms under the czars, there was no limit to the ferocity of the Gentile world, nor was there any sense of the passage of time. In the collective mind of the shtetl, Haman, recalled by every Purim as the wicked vizier at the court of Ahasuerus, and Chmielnitzki, the seventeenth-century Polish cossack instigator of frightful massacres, were only different aspects of the same story. All this was conveyed in the Yiddish phrase *laiden golus* (to suffer the Exile). No heroics, no charm. Life was perceived, accurately and rationally, as dangerous, fragile, and punctuated by disaster. In this context, the outbreak of a fresh misfortune was hardly news; it was expected. This was, after all, *golus*.

Since the Second World War, when the catastrophe of the Hitler regime wiped out Jewish life in both Germany and Eastern Europe, the new image of the shtetl that has developed bears an uncanny resem-

✪ RUTH GAY's essays have appeared in *Commentary*, *Dialogue*, *Horizon*, and other magazines.

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blance to the idealized worlds that Europeans conjured up during their long imperial service in India and Africa, both inventing a past and living it at the same time. In their own search for the past, the Jews of the United States were helped immensely by the brilliant construct published in 1952 by Elizabeth Herzog and a sometime anthropologist and alleged Soviet agent, Mark Zborowski. In their book, *Life Is with People,* they provided just the myth that was needed for American Jews as a counterpoise to the suddenly discovered, newly celebrated villages of origin of their Irish, Ukrainian, Swedish, and German neighbors.

Zborowski and Herzog and their fellow nostalgia seekers were not the first to idealize the Jewish past, but unlike their predecessors they were doing it at a safe distance. A century earlier, the German Jewish painter Moritz Oppenheim provided the acculturated German Jews of his day with a cycle of charming paintings showing the Jewish holidays. Set a generation before they were painted, they had the soft colors and dreamlike quality of fairy-tale illustration. Unlike Zborowski and Herzog, Oppenheim was working within a situation of real physical continuity. He shows his German Jewish ancestors firmly embedded in German life, living in recognizably German households and wearing fashionable German dress as they conduct their Passover seders or celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles in a gaily decorated booth. What German Jews saw, then, was a somewhat idealized rendering of themselves, but with a visible connection to their living present.

Zborowski and Herzog's characters, meant to be equally engaging, had their attraction heightened by their separation from the American Jewish middle class—not only by a distance in time, but also in place. They are of another country, speak another language, are part of a different society. While the German Jew looking at the Oppenheim cycle might have smiled at the "improvements" on the past made by the painter, the American Jew has no direct experience of the shtetl against which to check Zborowski and Herzog's account.

Unlike the situation of continuity in which Oppenheim painted the shtetl, Zborowski and Herzog's shtetl seems to have been created to give American Jews a past that they would find flattering and to which, by the time the authors created it, they were already strangers. What are glossed over in the authors' and other recent idealizations are the hatred, the poverty, and the pogroms amidst which the Jews lived, in favor of a portrait emphasizing the ordered tranquillity of a static religious community. Implied also is an invidious comparison with the presumed anomie of the individual in our time. It does not seem in our age as if we need to be reminded of any more Jewish horrors, and yet the shtetls of the Pale have suddenly become the envied habitations of shoemaker philosophers; its controversial Chasidic rabbis are all transcendent seers; its

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women range only from fishwives (with hearts of gold) to virginal maidens (with characters of steel); and everyone speaks in language both pithy and unendingly amusing. Along with a lot of simple self-gratification, this panoramic vision contains a lot of condescension.

A bare three-quarters of a century lie between us and the vanished world of the Jewish shtetl, and while we concentrate on trying to recapture its physical image, its spirit lives on unobserved. The shtetl of the nineteenth century is like a dybbuk, a lost spirit changing its form as it changes the body in which it lives, and there are many ways of approaching it. We can read of the shtetl in Russian government reports, in travelers' and journalists' accounts. We can read the works of its sympathizers, such as Sholom Aleichem, writing about his archetypal Kasrilevke, or I. B. Singer, with his love of the demonic. We can also read its critics in the autobiography of Salomon Maimon, an eighteenth-century Jew who fled the shtetl's ignorance and narrowness, or in the novels of Karl Emil Franzos, an assimilated Jew in nineteenth-century Galicia, who fought against the superstition of the shtetl. There is the voluminous evidence of the newspapers, magazines, and memoirs of the period, as well as the letters and diaries of countless emigrants. Of these many sources, fiction may offer us the truest portrait because, with its ostensible aim of presenting plot and character, it unselfconsciously reveals the hidden sources of shtetl life.

Two chroniclers of the shtetl, Sholom Aleichem and Karl Emil Franzos, writing only a decade apart, provide us with complementary views of their world: Franzos in Galicia, Sholom Aleichem in Russia; Franzos writing in German, Sholom Aleichem in Yiddish; Franzos the outsider, Sholom Aleichem the insider; Franzos the reformer, Sholom Aleichem the celebrator. Vastly different though their perspectives may be, they are united by their ability to transmit the feeling of the lives and the very voices of their times.

Despite Franzos's extravagant plotting, his novels retain a certain power today because his characters are real and their adventures have the unmistakable ring of truth. The town of Czortkow in Eastern Galicia, which is his principal subject, had only five thousand residents at the end of the nineteenth century, of whom half were Jewish. Small as it was, it was a microcosm of the nationalities in that corner of the Hapsburg Empire. The German-speaking Austrian bureaucrats, the Polish aristocrats, the indigenous Ruthenian and Polish peasants, the Jews in the ghetto, the visiting Chasidim from all over Eastern Europe arriving to attend the court of the Ruzhyn *rebbe* are all painstakingly depicted, particularly in their tensions with one another. Franzos brings to his characterizations a native sense of the telling gesture. Although he writes in German, he is so skillful in rendering the rhythms and

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cadences of his characters' speech that we almost believe that we are hearing more than one language.

Sholom Aleichem's task was in some respects simpler. He wrote the language of the world he was describing—but with an oddly distancing effect. His education, his worldliness, his objectivity created the separation that gave his writing its ultimate sardonic bite. It is not surprising that one of his favorite forms is the long monologue in which the speaker addresses himself to "Mr. Sholom Aleichem," a sympathetic but nonetheless impartial observer.

Sholom Aleichem's enormous output has been translated in part into English prose; but it has suffered a further translation for the American stage (*Fiddler on the Roof*) and finally for a movie. I am not going to complain about how much has been lost in the transposition to stage and screen—though it has been a great deal—but we must be wary of how much of the complexity of his world has been stylized and simplified in the process. We need to listen closely to what Sholom Aleichem says, because the official reports and migration statistics can help us only a certain distance toward recapturing the lost society of the shtetl. Sholom Aleichem's fiction brings us the genuine voice of the past, while the stage and screen productions tell us more about American Jewish nostalgia than about actual life in Kasrilevke.

Sholom Aleichem was born as Solomon J. Rabinowitz into the world of the shtetl in 1859 in Russia, where he received a traditional Jewish education, together with a Russian one. He spoke Yiddish, Hebrew, and Russian and wrote—steadily, almost obsessively, in a tiny hand—stories, observations, essays, and novels about a world that was already breaking up. Although the darling of the Yiddish-speaking public, he profited very little from his writings, only managing a little comfort at the very end of his life. In 1914, caught by the war in Germany, he fled to the United States where he died two years later, just as his beloved shtetl also was coming to an end.

A man of infinite charm and altogether winning ways, Sholom Aleichem was no businessman. Early in his marriage, he managed to lose his wife's fortune and then his mother-in-law's in speculation on the stock market. As a consequence, his whole life became a desperate struggle to support his large household on the scanty payments he received for his writing. Occasionally he would make a tour of Jewish centers in Eastern Europe, where he would read aloud from his works to full houses whose wild enthusiasm refreshed both the family coffers and his own flagging spirits.

His devotion to that public extended even to his moving last testament. Written in pain, in the knowledge of his impending early death, in the midst of a war, in strange surroundings in the Bronx, remote

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from every familiar sound and place, Sholom Aleichem's last wishes express his indissoluble tie to the ordinary Jews of Eastern Europe. "Wherever I die," he wrote, "I should be laid to rest not among the aristocrats, the elite, the rich, but rather among the plain people, the toilers, the common folk, so that the tombstone that will be placed on my grave will grace the simple graves about me, and the simple graves will adorn my tombstone, even as the plain people have, during my life, beatified their folk writer." That this feeling was returned was all too rapidly demonstrated. Sholom Aleichem's death in May 1916, at the age of fifty-seven, shortly following the writing of his will, became an occasion for an outpouring of Jewish feeling. Far, far away from Kasrilevke, hundreds of thousands of Jews found their way to the East Bronx to pay their last respects.

Karl Emil Franzos, who wrote equally obsessively all his life about the Jews of Galicia, was never part of their world, though he was born in 1848 just outside of Czortkow, a capital of Chasidic Jewry. His father, the officially appointed doctor in the region, was a Jew by birth, a man of the Enlightenment by belief, as had been *his* father, and passionately German in speech and culture. Before his early death in 1858, he imparted to his son both his convictions and his feelings, and did it so powerfully that one feels, in Franzos's description of Jewish life and in his opinions, that he is as much a man of the Enlightenment as his father. What all three generations shared was an admiration for the power of rationality, an abhorrence of "superstition" that included *all* religions, and a complete confidence in the superior and redeeming qualities of German culture. The Franzoses, father and son, saw the improvement in the situation of the Jews as tied to a general raising of the intellectual level of mankind, when the triumph of reason would banish hatred and division among peoples.

Although Franzos's father felt himself isolated by culture and belief from the Jews of Czortkow, he firmly retained his Jewish identity. Every evening, Franzos recalled, after his father had given him a German lesson, "he would continue with stories, sometimes of the German War of Liberation or the battles of the Maccabi, or sometimes of Herman, chief of the Cherusci, or of the Jewish martyrs of Worms." In this way, Franzos concludes, "Germanness and Jewishness grew together in me as a single unity, since I heard only of the noblest deeds of both which inflamed me to the highest pitch of enthusiasm." In fact, however, the only Jew he knew was his Hebrew tutor. "Only rarely did I ever enter a Jewish house, never a synagogue, and I knew nothing of the religious customs."

Despite the welter of languages and peoples into which he had been born, in what he called "half-Asia," Franzos learned early where he

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belonged. "As to nationality," his father told him, "you are neither a Pole, nor a Ruthenian, nor a Jew. You are a German. But as to your faith, you are a Jew." Yet, Franzos reports, he "grew up as if on an island," outside the Jewish community, but also outside the Catholic community in whose schools he was educated. When he has to give up an academic career whose price is, as he puts it, "the baptismal font," he finds it "out of the question [*ausgeschlossen*] to make a bargain with my religious faith." But the sacrifice had the effect of making him more inquiring about Judaism, and while his "feeling of Germanness did not diminish," he described how his "feeling that he also belonged to another community grew stronger."

In 1859, when he was eleven, Franzos moved with his widowed mother to Czernowitz as his father had wished. Not far from the city of Czortkow, it was the capital of Bukovina, with a population of some fifteen thousand when Franzos moved there. It had good schools, a rich Jewish communal life, and could even support a theater, although it had no university until 1875. To Franzos, what made it infinitely superior to Czortkow was that it was "a small, friendly and thoroughly German city. I felt myself to be in the anteroom of the paradise of Germany."

Once there, Franzos explored the Jewish quarter, where, he wrote, "I was attracted to the poetic qualities of many of the customs . . . but what I felt to be particularly painful was the superstition into which those who had once been the standard-bearers of the purest monotheism had sunk." This word, "superstition," which would have been his father's word—and his grandfather's—recurs again and again in Franzos's description of ghetto life. While, as a true man of the Enlightenment, he will often pair the superstition of a rabbi with the ignorance of a monk, his self-imposed mission to rescue the Jews of Eastern Europe from their isolation became the driving impulse behind his writing. In his stories he renamed Czortkow, calling it Barnow, because, he said, the Galician name was too difficult for Germans to pronounce, and because some of his characters were drawn from the town of Sadagora (a journalist's rather than a novelist's scruple). But he was unsparing in laying bare the unrelenting poverty, squalor, and physical darkness of the Jewish settlement. When his novels and stories were criticized by Chasidim and others who suggested that he might just as well have let himself be baptized, Franzos's response was, "This is the best sign that I have done my duty."

While Franzos seems somewhat puzzling today, in his time he was neither alone nor eccentric. Many of the well-educated Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and in Western Poland adopted German culture as their own, as Franzos and his father had done, fostering schools and theaters, publishing newspapers and magazines, and main-

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taining steady contact with the German world, particularly by attendance at the German universities. Yet the ideas of the Enlightenment so cherished by Franzos, which, translated into politics, promised so much to the Jews of the West, hardly penetrated beyond the Imperial Russian border. In the epoch of the Enlightenment, the Jews of Eastern Europe were placed under stricter confinement than they had ever been, and they did not emerge from it until more than a century later.

The Jews were the unwelcome part of the bargain that Russia made in the first Partition of Poland in 1772. In December 1791, wanting to keep this population from spreading into Russia proper, Catherine II promulgated the ukase establishing the Pale of Settlement for Jews. Among its many restrictions were those that barred Jews from borderlands (lest they smuggle), forbade them to move from the area designated as the Pale, and prohibited them from living in Moscow or St. Petersburg unless they were merchants of the first class, which meant that they were very rich and had paid a large tax for the privilege. With superficial amendments, Catherine's ukase remained in effect through various Alexanders and Nicholases until 1917, when the new revolutionary government abolished it. The immediate effect of these laws relating to the Pale was to exclude East European Jews from society at large, to enclose them in their own communities so that their language, culture, and even government were different from those of their countrymen.

Taking in a north-south corridor of one million square kilometers, the Pale became a prison by the end of the nineteenth century for nearly five million Jews. Jewish settlements had existed, of course, long before Catherine's decree, not only in Russia/Poland, but in other parts of Eastern Europe as well. The importance of the ukase of 1791 is that it froze the conditions of Jewish life for the largest single group of Jews in Eastern Europe. Shtetl life developed differently, therefore, in the Russian Empire than in Galicia or Hungary or Romania, bent by what was or was not permitted by legislation or social custom. What these villages shared, however, under whatever government they existed, was a fundamental social and physical isolation from the rest of the population. As a consequence, the shtetl fostered its own language—Yiddish—developed its own culture, and took Judaism into new and exotic byways unknown in other parts of the world.

Yet at the very worst moment for the Jews of the East, the Jews in France were experiencing a literally revolutionary change in their status. In August 1791, four months before the Pale was established, the French also promulgated a decree concerning the Jews. In keeping with the spirit of the Revolution, it explicitly granted Jews full citizenship, "annulling all adjournments, restrictions and exceptions."

The counterpoint between the East and the West exemplified in

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these two pieces of legislation has continued to this day. If we consider only the intentions—one to liberate, the other to confine—the Jews in these two parts of the world lived under entirely different expectations and with a profoundly different sense of their place in society. In the West there was a legal assurance of freedom and equality that was carried across the Rhine to the German states as Napoleon's armies advanced. It gave Jews hope for a new position in the world in which they would finally shake off the stigma of the Middle Ages.

Jews in the West rapidly adopted Western languages, were educated in secular schools, and became full-fledged participants in Western culture. The consequence, of course, was that as they took on, more and more, the characteristics of the culture of the countries in which they lived, they were also more and more estranged from the Jews in the East. The Eastern Jews, in turn, receded into their internal religious and political struggles, which were largely irrelevant to the West. Yet even for the Jews in the East, cut off as they were from European politics, Napoleon became a name to conjure with. So unworldly a figure as the Chasidic rabbi Menahem Mendel of Rymanov in southeastern Poland is reputed to have offered a prayer for Napoleon's success in his campaign against the czar. In the ebb and flow of Napoleon's fortunes, Jewish life was deeply involved, directly in the West, and indirectly in the East.

At first the possibilities Napoleon opened made only hairline cracks in the life of the shtetl. But however powerful its structure and however terrifying the outside world, the Jewish village of Eastern Europe could not contain all of life and indeed had carried the seeds of its disintegration from its origin. It was this inner tension that both Sholom Aleichem and Franzos recognized and used as the propelling agent of their stories about ghettoized life in the shtetl.

For the orthodox Jews of the shtetl, the most feared seducer of all was Western learning. Individuals slipped away to learn Western languages, to study at universities, and to begin the struggle with a new way of life. New types began to appear in Europe. Replacing the old court Jews, the private financiers of kings, were Jewish intellectuals (both men and women), writers, painters, doctors, lawyers, bankers, businessmen, who by virtue of their talent, charm, intelligence, or money gained admission to European society. It was a bewildering time, filled with strain and conflict for those who crossed over or were tempted to.

Those who remained did not find their life made easier by these defections. In fact, there was a sense in the East that the entire German community was lost to Judaism. German Jews dressed like Germans; by 1830 they even spoke like Germans and, much more subtle, and indeed ruinous to continuity with the East, were educated like Germans. In the East reverberations from the Western world continued to assault the

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shtetl, and by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the cracks had begun to widen alarmingly. There was no longer a single mode of Jewish life in the shtetl. There were many ways of life, and there were also many kinds of shtetlach. Karl Emil Franzos saw these differences quite distinctly as he contrasted Barnow with Buczacz, another Galician town. He wrote:

> The Jews of Barnow are Chasidim: bigots and visionaries, wild fantastical fanatics who swing in an extraordinary way between cruel asceticism and voluptuous indulgence. . . . In Buczacz, in contrast, live the "Misnagdim," hard, rational people, who honor the Bible above all else, and the Talmud only insofar as it elucidates the Bible. . . . In Barnow, there is much fasting, but also much feasting; Buczacz life proceeds along measured uniform tracks. In Barnow disputes on learned questions fill the whole livelong day while financial speculation occupies only the intervals. In Buczacz they are dedicated to crafts and trade; industriousness and bourgeois dignity are greater. . . . The Barnowers are eccentric and passionate; the Buczaczers have the reputation of being hard and calculating.

For Franzos, the key differences among Jews were religious.

Sholom Aleichem worked with a broader panorama, bringing in not only Chasidim and Mithnagdim but also the many varieties of secularized Jews—socialists, atheists, Zionists—to populate his stories. There were also observant Jews in modern dress; there were Chasidim who cared about the worldly as well as the otherworldly news. There were the handful who sought out secular and higher educations, who traveled to the universities in Vienna or Moscow or St. Petersburg. There were the learned and the illiterate.

What ultimately drained the shtetl of its vitality and its population was the glimmer of hope held out by the legacy of the French Revolution and the possibility of realizing that hope in the West. Between 1881 and 1930 nearly three and one-half million Jews acted on that possibility and left Eastern Europe. Of these, two and one-half million came to the United States, not least among them Sholom Aleichem himself.

Although Sholom Aleichem was writing about Jews in Imperial Russia and Franzos was writing about Jews in the Hapsburg Empire, the characters they wrote about were essentially the same poor Jews. Those well-to-do Jews in Eastern Europe who adopted European culture without abandoning their Jewish identity, who built great synagogues, who established institutions of learning and charity, are still awaiting their historian. From memoirs, however, we learn that even the privileged Jews who lived in Moscow were keenly aware of their marginality. Boris D. Bogen, who was a contemporary of Sholom Aleichem, and the son of a Jewish government contractor, tells in his autobiography how he came to be born in Moscow. His father, he writes, "having spent the

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requisite five years of business in the Pale and having paid an enormous fee for membership in the first guild . . . was entitled to live in Moscow." But the Hebrew school to which this contractor sent his son was illegal. "For the first time," Bogen reports, "I saw poverty . . . the threadbare dress of the women in the teacher's home, the anxious doling out of wood for the fire in the brick stove, the bare, peeling walls in that room. Sometimes I played with my teacher's children in the courtyard and I remember wondering why they dressed so poorly when their father had so many pupils; it was some years later that I knew of the large bribes that the teacher had to give in order that his school might exist without interference from the police."

The themes of Bogen's story—the realities of poverty and fear, the irreality of Jewish learning in the contemporary world, and the mediating force of bribery—appear again and again as the absolutes of Jewish life in Eastern Europe. One of the richest aspects of the Yiddish vocabulary, and a measure of its importance in the language, is the number of ways Jews found to describe poverty. "They were so poor that they starved to death three times a day." "He didn't have the money to buy the water to pour over his kasha [buckwheat groats]." "He looked like a poor man before Passover." A Yiddish thesaurus needs nineteen columns of fine print to set out all the synonyms and comparisons for *misfortune*; *good fortune* takes only five.

Poverty and fear went hand in hand. As the least favored minority in Eastern Europe, Jews had only a tiny economic base of permitted occupations from which to draw their livelihood. At the same time real physical perils were a daily accompaniment of this life. In Eastern Europe a Jew—visible by his dress, his speech, his gait—was free game. Everyone from a schoolchild to a government official could insult him with impunity, and a Jew counted himself lucky if he were not set upon and beaten. The village peddler, a stock figure in Eastern Europe, who left his shtetl at the beginning of the week to make a circle of the surrounding peasant villages before returning the following Friday, was a physically defenseless figure in a hostile natural and cultural world.

The dog was the powerful symbol for the enemy in Jewish life—irrational, implacable, dangerous. Dogs were ever one of the primary hazards of the road, even more to be feared than the violent and unpredictable tempers of the peasants. There is little sentimentality about animals in Yiddish, a language that uses special pejorative words for the way they eat and the way they die. Sholom Aleichem, who understood this antipathy, writes almost apologetically about his pet dog and describes what an exception he was when he was adopted as a stray. "Silver was so clever," he writes in his autobiography, "that he immediately acknowledged his new masters. Moreover, he treated Jews with

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respect: he did not worry them like most dogs, who boil with hatred as soon as they see the long Jewish gaberdine." Jews, then, did not own dogs. Dogs were understood either as a peasant necessity or as an aristocratic indulgence. In fact, these attitudes are so ingrained in East European Jewish thinking that as late as the 1950s, when the famous Jewish actor Maurice Schwartz was directing the Yiddish Art Theatre in New York, he could depend on the dog to telegraph his meaning. In a family saga, he wanted to show the transformation in the life of an elderly couple who has suddenly come into a fortune. The second-act curtain rose to reveal them seated in thronelike chairs on either side of a baronial fireplace. Sitting beside them, one at each chair, were two Great Danes, their heads practically reaching to the shoulders of the little old couple. Nothing needed to be said. Wave after wave of laughter shook the house as the scene was taken in, and it was some time before the actors could get on with the play.

The shtetl thus needs to be seen as a place embedded in a system in which legally nothing was permitted and in which a curse and a blow—expressions of the deepest disgust—were in and of the nature of life for Jews. But they coped, and one of the simplest and easiest ways to cope was through bribery. A German pastor, using the pseudonym Kurt Aram, who traveled through Russia just before the start of World War I, reported on the vital role of bribery in the life of the Jews. To begin with, he notes, some two thousand regulations stood on the books concerning the Jews, which the police were willing to forget when a few rubles were adroitly applied. If the police officer in town needed some extra cash, he would, of course, remind himself of some neglected ordinances proscribing Jewish activity. In Bessarabia, the governor, Prince Urussov, estimated that in his province one million rubles annually flowed into the hands of the police through bribery. Using this figure as his base, Aram concluded that the Jews in Russia must have been spending between ten and fifteen million rubles a year on blackmail payments that simply made it possible for them to continue living. Not for privileges, not for advantage, just to continue living.

Both rich and poor were caught in this game, and Sholom Aleichem recorded it in all its variations. As a way of heightening the distinctions among the classes of Jews in Russia, he uses a geographical device. He concentrates his poor Jews, whom he loves best of all, in his fictional town of Kasrilevke, his middle-class Jews in equally fictional Yehupetz, and gives them both a summer "resort" outside Kasrilevke, which he calls Boiberik. In his description of life in Boiberik, further divided into "Eretz Israel" for the poor and "Palestina" for the rich, he begins with its legal—that is to say, its illegal—origins.

As Sholom Aleichem describes the settlement in *Summer Romances,*

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it becomes a veritable paradigm of life in the Pale, of the constant resort to chicanery and illegality that was built into the texture of daily existence. "Formerly this waste land outside Kasrilevke," he writes, "belonged to the Gentiles; today it belongs to the Jews. Which is to say, as far as ownership goes, today it is still owned by the Gentiles because it is reckoned to be outside the town limits. And there, of course, a Jew is not permitted. But in the summer, living in the dacha of a Gentile, that is permitted. Which is to say, as far as permission goes, one is not permitted. But, if you pay the police commissioner and get a paper from a doctor that you are sick and that you need a rest cure, then you are permitted to enter the forbidden Garden of Eden."

In another brilliant little vignette, Sholom Aleichem reports on what happens when the system breaks down. When a new government overseer comes to Kasrilevke and will not take bribes, it is a disaster for the Jews. Life grinds to a halt and the Jewish community finally sends a petition to the czar asking that the new official be dismissed and their old approachable, corrupt inspector be returned so that life can resume. Or, in "The Passover Expropriation," Sholom Aleichem describes how "the town has experienced a series of burglaries, each more frightful than the next. It is dangerous to be alive! One began to long for the good old days when a police inspector (you only had to slip him a ruble) knew how to keep a whole city in his hand."

Other stories turn on the right of residence, one of the most vexatious of the two thousand regulations against the Jews. The agitation of Sholom Aleichem's great character Menachem Mendel is enhanced in his letters to his wife because he does not legally have the right to live in Odessa, where he is currently conducting his wild stock market speculations. In another story, "Two Anti-Semites," where Sholom Aleichem very gently touches on the expedients of a Jew trying to pass as a Gentile, he describes his hero as a great traveler. "He travels from Lodz to Moscow and from Moscow to Lodz several times a year. He knows all the buffets, all the stations along the way, is hand in glove with all the conductors, and has visited all the remote provinces—even the ones where Jews are only allowed to stay twenty-four hours." There it is again—not particularly relevant to the plot, but indispensable in conveying the suffocating atmosphere of life in the Pale.

In his stories Sholom Aleichem explores two kinds of problems: the everyday evils of poverty, corruption, ignorance, and anti-Semitism, and the long-range threats to shtetl life, principally from the attraction of Western culture and secularism. Like his readers, he took the daily hardships as the given; his charm lay in his ability to make his characters believable, even as they attempt to sweep back the ocean with a broom. He can write a hymn of praise about a tailor whose clientele was so poor

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that he never worked on a whole piece of cloth, and whose specialty was mending, darning, patching, and converting exhausted garments into something wearable. "He could, for example," Sholom Aleichem tells us, "take an old caftan and turn it into a cloak; then the cloak into a pair of trousers; of the trousers he could make a shirt; and of the shirt something else again. Don't think that's such easy work." Here is Sholom Aleichem at his most exuberant best.

He probes with great care, and without emphasis, the tensions of modernity that will eventually tear the shtetl apart. Sholom Aleichem saw the consequences of modernity even as he announced with exaggerated awe the arrival of various mechanical wonders in Kasrilevke—the streetcar, the sewing machine. In his most famous series of stories about Tevya the milkman, he deals directly with the problems of social change when one of Tevya's daughters runs off with a revolutionary and another marries a Gentile. His intimations that all is not quiet in the shtetl are sometimes louder, sometimes softer, but they are always insistently present, frequently thrown in as an aside. Like every society, the shtetl accepted, even indulged, deviations up until certain boundaries were crossed, and Sholom Aleichem rarely lets slip the opportunity to note these transgressions. In his story "Eternal Life," the deviance appears parenthetically as his hero begins, "I was a young man, living as the custom was, off my in-laws, sitting at my studies, dipping into forbidden books on the sly when my father-in-law and mother-in-law weren't looking."

What made his readers laugh was his accuracy in exposing the absurdity of everyday life, but some of the absurdity lay less in the characters than in the inherent contradictions of shtetl life itself. Even the rich Jews could not escape its tyranny, and the joke seemed even better when a rich man rather than a poor one was caught in its meshes. In Sholom Aleichem's one novel about the middle classes, *Marienbad,* he contrasts a series of frivolous love affairs played out in a parody of European style by his Warsaw cast of characters with the unrelieved earnestness of a traditional family that is also visiting the spa. The ladies from Warsaw, on arriving at their hotels, shed their marriage wigs. They flirt with the young men. They go rowing together on the Sabbath—a forbidden activity. It is rumored that someone has eaten unkosher food. And all of this goes on as a counterpoint to the efforts of a mother trying, in a most traditional way, to find husbands for her daughters among these wastrels. She engages a marriage broker, a *shadchan.* No laughing matter there, but it heightens the absurdity of the romantic farce in the first plot when the lovers there are the prospective husbands in the second.

Sholom Aleichem was intensely aware of the tenacity of traditional

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institutions and used the conflict between old and new in his stories to fine effect. The arranged marriage was only one of many usages that were beginning to stir a sense of restlessness among the young, and it becomes the pivot of his tale "A Story with Seven Matchmakers." It begins with the decision of the editor of the progressive newspaper in Kasrilevke to run a personals column so that young people can find their mates directly, in a modern way, without the intervention of a *shadchan*. But what does the prudent father of a marriageable young man do? He calls in a *shadchan* to investigate the qualifications of a promising young beauty who has advertised herself. This is only the beginning. By the time the story is finished and all the matches have been made, half the town has been involved, including the newspaper editors.

There are few real villains in Sholom Aleichem's stories, because he would rather expose the absurdity of everyday life and the frailty of humanity than indulge in a rant. Sometimes he shows us the struggle between the rich and the poor, sometimes the struggle between the Orthodox and the secular Jews, and sometimes, ever so gently, he pokes fun at the benighted ignorance in which Kasrilevke lives. In a gem of a story entitled "Dreyfus in Kasrilevke," he describes how the Kasrilevkeites discover the Dreyfus case, their subsequent absorption in its progress, their excited interest in the retrial, and their dismay at Dreyfus's second conviction. Because there is so much detail in setting the stage for the story—namely, that there is only one newspaper subscription in the whole town, that even the Jew with the subscription must wait humbly for the Russian postmaster to give him his paper, and that the Kasrilevkeites, in order to understand the case, immediately transpose it into shtetl terms—we almost forget that he is really pointing his finger at Kasrilevke's isolation from the rest of the world and at its uncertain grasp of the realities of that world.

Despite his sympathies, Sholom Aleichem was no Kasrilevkeite. Although he grew up speaking Yiddish, he spoke Russian with his wife and children, gave his children a Russian secular education, and, when he was sick at the end of his life, asked his daughter to read him stories from Chekhov, his favorite author. Even by his children's generation, traditional Jewish learning was thinning out, though they all knew Yiddish. His daughter, Marie Waife-Goldberg, reports in her biography of her father that, when the original Tevya came by their summer cottage to chat with her father, Sholom Aleichem would often laugh out loud at remarks that Tevya made in Hebrew but that his children could not understand.

The generations in Sholom Aleichem's own family were, in fact, a demonstration of the change that he was charting in his stories. His children could aspire to a university education and the professions,

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where, as a young man, he had had to depend on private tutors for his secular learning. For them the Russian language was their mother tongue, just as a Russian education was the center of their schooling. His children's intellectual world, then, turned on a different educational axis from his. The Bible and its commentaries were replaced by Russian literature; his children saw themselves as worldly Europeans rather than as ghetto Jews.

As in Sholom Aleichem's family, the act of connecting with the surrounding culture is a process that is renewed by Jews in every generation—with more or less pain, difficulty, and alienation. In the two centuries since the French Revolution, each generation of Jews in Europe has wrestled with the promise of equality and the reality of legal and social disablement. Until Hitler, this promise was a shimmering goal that drew each generation forward, the bright prospect making them patient, dogged even, in their day-to-day struggle for a better place in society and enhancement of their self-respect.

Although Western and East European Jews seemed widely separated in language, culture, and economic status, they shared one ineradicable quality, their Jewishness, which gave even the most assimilated Jew a perpetual sense of imbalance, self-consciousness, and a special kind of bifocal vision. In every generation the emerging adult had to rediscover for himself the position that expressed his own relationship to his forebears and to the world in which he would live. While the responses were various, the process was inevitable and endlessly repeated. The tremendous past of Judaism and the emotional power of its closed world are not lightly shouldered aside, however seductively the riches of secular culture beckoned and in spite of the aching need to belong to the country of one's birth. For every Jew standing between his two heritages, there is a process of reconciliation.

The autobiographies, memoirs, and essays of Jews in the United States and Europe make up an instructive anthology of how they thought about this process. Yet it would be hard to chart these responses on any kind of "developmental" scale. While the second, third, and later generations take for granted what was a source of wonder to the first, there seems to be no difference between those first explorers, whatever their period or place. The same process seems to be at work on Moses Mendelssohn, in the 1750s, studying philosophy in Berlin, or Salomon Maimon, in Poland during the 1760s, teaching himself German from printers' marks in his Hebrew books. A century later Karl Emil Franzos ate dry bread for dinner rather than forego an evening at the theater in Czernowitz, and Sholom Aleichem would report his excitement on discovering Russian literature at his father-in-law's house in Sofievka in 1877. In Vilna, "the Jerusalem of the North," more than one yeshiva

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student taught himself Russian by laboriously learning the letters from signs on shop windows, or studied English from antiquated grammars in preparation for embarking for America, the Golden Land. Abraham Cahan tells of how, when he came to the United States, he taught himself algebra from a textbook using the only technique that he knew: by chanting it and memorizing it as if it were a Talmudic text. And finally, in the 1920s, there was a whole generation of immigrants' children who immersed themselves blindly, dazedly in Western learning in the wide-windowed libraries planted by Andrew Carnegie for just that purpose across the United States.

To understand the true heroism of the inhabitants of the shtetl, then, we need to rescue them from the myths that have been woven around them. If we do not see the darkness, we cannot appreciate the light. The myth diminishes them and diminishes the generations who struggled to make bridges between the ghetto and the outside world. Although we must be on guard against the picture-book clichés of the shtetl world—the fine-baked Sabbath loaves, the warmth of candlelight, the festive table—what cannot be denied is that it was a complete world and that any breach in the educational system, language, dress, any sense of self outside the norms approved by the community brought serious consequences: social ostracism, alienation, ultimately even religious excommunication. Those who wanted to know about life outside the shtetl were aware of the danger of their desires. Jewish literature of the late nineteenth century, writes one historian of Russia, "is replete with descriptions of secret excursions of Talmudical students into the realm of forbidden knowledge. In the dead of night, these lads would stealthily enter the screened and deserted portion of the women's synagogue; there safe from intrusion, by the light of a candle or of the moon, they would devour forbidden fruits of knowledge, such as a Hebrew periodical, a Russian textbook or a German grammar."

These collisions of cultures, like an atomic explosion, release an enormous amount of energy. They produce characters with a driving, obsessive, almost missionary quality, who spend their lives coping with the consequences of the explosion that they have generated. There is a profound disjunction in their lives before and after the explosion, and much of the force that brought them to the break is then needed to support a new life that they take up without community, kin, habit, or even language.

This conflict is the theme that preoccupies Karl Emil Franzos, and it must be said at once that he is better at describing the conflict than at plotting its progress. Much of his work is based on the scenes, events, and people he had known as he was growing up, and his very career as a

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novelist owes its origin to an unrequited love. In 1868, in a white heat of passion, he wrote his first story, "Das Christusbild," which eventually became an important part of the collection to which he gave the title *The Jews of Barnow*. The story was his revenge for his rejection by a Gentile girl who wrote him at the last moment that she could not bear to be married to a Jew, "Ich bring's doch nicht über's Herz. . . ." He also wove much of himself and his father into his writing. Wherever there is a saintly village doctor, that is Franzos's father, whose memory and teachings he honored in this way. He commemorates his own years as a student at a Dominican monastery with many vignettes of monks, servants, abbots, and the customs of monastery life.

Without the range of Sholom Aleichem or the suppleness of his portraits, without the ease of the native, Franzos offers us a different, yet still important, angle of vision. His novels are also populated with matchmakers, *schnorrers*, pompous rabbis, poor tailors, students reading forbidden books. But there is this difference: these characters all exist in the service of Franzos's overriding passion to expose the crushing effect of Orthodox Judaism (and occasionally Christianity) on the human spirit and to celebrate the liberation made possible by the adoption of European, more specifically German, culture.

Although Franzos depicts with touching warmth the happiness generated by the reading of Schiller or the joyous freedom that follows escape from the ghetto, none of his characters really succeeds; none is happy. We are left, therefore, with a strangely ambiguous message. In the story "Esterke Regina," a young man who goes to Vienna to become a doctor loses his childhood sweetheart, Esterke, who feels that she cannot fit into his new life. After he receives a deathbed letter from her, confessing both her love and her estrangement, he ends by taking a clearly suicidal appointment as a doctor in the East Indies. Again, one of Franzos's women characters who marries a Gentile is ostracized by both the Jewish and Christian communities in Barnow. Another girl, the daughter of the richest man in the ghetto, the Shylock of Barnow, runs away with a hussar. Here the story takes a more conventional, melodramatic turn when she is spurned by her lover, turned away from her father's door, and dies on his threshold.

In an unusual variation on the theme of forbidden love, Franzos attempts to show such an affair from the perspective of each community. In "Der wilde Starost und die schöne Jutta," a nobleman abducts a beautiful Jewish girl who then falls in love with him. The two live happily together in his castle outside of Barnow. She bears him a son, decides to convert, and they are about to marry. On the night before the wedding, while the nobleman is away, Jutta and her son are carried out of the castle by a group of Jews who then spirit her away deep into

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Russia. On the long journey, the child dies in her arms, and shortly thereafter she throws herself from a bridge into the Dniester. There is a double revenge in the story, because after months of fruitless searching, the nobleman orders a pogrom in Barnow. One of his servants, who is one of the narrators, kills the ringleader of the Jewish kidnappers. But nothing helps to relieve the nobleman's pain, and he goes mad. The other narrator is the mother of the murdered ringleader, who tells, with heartrending detail, of the torment of the Jewish community and the death of her son.

The double narration is a real tour de force, since the reader is deliberately left with an uncertain feeling about where justice lies. But Franzos is too much of a moralist to leave us without guidance. "A lie," he concludes, "has reverberated through the centuries and into our own day—that only religion brings bliss and love is blind. There is no way of counting how much blood and tears have flowed in order to sustain this lie. Let us finally understand the truth, that only love can bring bliss and that religion is blind." This is a gloss on the Enlightenment passion for reason.

Many of Franzos's most telling scenes turn on the love of outcasts for one another, a love that transcends the proscriptions of both their societies. Sometimes it is romantic love between a man and a woman, but often it is the love of a teacher and student or of two comrades. At such moments we are quite convinced by Franzos that we have reached a very high plane of human experience.

Franzos rings another change on the theme of difference in his novel *Moschko von Parma*, where his hero is distinguished from birth by exceptional size and strength. As he grows up, instead of fleeing from the attacks of the Gentile boys in the usual Jewish way, he knocks a few heads together. He has no talent for learning and runs away to try to enlist in the army when he is thirteen, again contrary to Jewish custom. The Jewish community is bewildered about what to do with such an exception and finally apprentices him to a Ruthenian blacksmith, who very grudgingly accepts him. Yet he flourishes in the workshop as his strength and talent win the old man over. But even here there is no happy end. The lad falls in love with a Ruthenian peasant girl who also loves him, but before that affair can be resolved, he is taken away to the army, this time most unwillingly. When he returns twenty-one years later, broken in body and spirit, his final happiness is to die in the arms of his illegitimate son.

We smile at such melodrama today, but Franzos's stories may be less improbable than we think. Long absences over long distances, uncertain mail delivery, no telephones, the poor state of medicine, the violent consequences of social transgressions—all combine very naturally to

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produce the extravagant gestures, the sudden appearances and disappearances that we call melodrama.

Sholom Aleichem also deals with the estrangement from the community that followed the long years of military service. Where Moschko is rejected by his community but taken in by his Ruthenian comrade, Sholom Aleichem's Jonah, in his story "Jonah the Bather," is treated by the Jews as the village fool. He is given a job in the bathhouse, and his isolation is symbolized by his barely comprehensible language. After twenty-five years in the czar's army, he speaks an amalgam of "half-Russian, half-Yiddish" and lives as an outcast, neither a Jew nor a Russian. On only one day in the year does Jonah become a part of the Jewish community—on Purim, a day of masks and make-believe, when he, too, has a place among the revelers.

It is a curious question why neither Franzos nor Sholom Aleichem could let their breakaways live happily ever after. Reality was, in fact, kinder to them than these writers suggest. Many students from villages in Galicia went to medical schools in Vienna. Jews in such large Polish cities as Warsaw and Lodz created a flourishing secular culture that included not only intellectuals but also workers and artisans. There was also a larger number of middle- and upper-class acculturated Jews in Eastern Europe than the current emphasis on the shtetl allows.

Yet what is more arresting than tragedy? Both Franzos and Sholom Aleichem used it to provide an edge to their stories. But Franzos had worked too long as a journalist to be able to resist pathos, and his good intentions ended by making his stories less successful than his characters. Sholom Aleichem, with the discipline of an artist, used the impending or actual disaster that was, in any case, part of the grain of shtetl life to give a tinge of irony to his work, bringing the reader into complicity with him by forcing him to recognize a special view of reality.

These dark aspects of shtetl life appear again and again in Sholom Aleichem's work and bespeak a longer perspective than his anecdotal style would suggest. In his unfinished autobiography, *The Great Fair*, he tells of being accosted while on a reading tour by two young Chasidim who had waited for him outside his hotel. "I have been praying for this moment for a long time," one of the young men said as he kissed Sholom Aleichem's hand. "You are our comforter, you sweeten the bitter exile for us." It was this idea of exile—*golus*—that was the ever-present frame around his work.

Golus has overtones in Yiddish that are missing from the technical sounding *Diaspora* in English or the formal *Galuth* of Hebrew. In Yiddish it hangs in the air like a sigh, an utterance of despair. In the depths of the Russian Pale it was a word layered with meaning, but also and above all, it had a concrete actuality. It expressed not only the

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spiritual condition of the Jews, but explained the poverty, humiliation, degradation, and hopelessness of daily life. Only a word with the fatefulness of *golus* could contain the bitterness of the Jewish condition.

When Yiddish came to America, a certain disjunction crept into the relationship between Jewish life and *golus*. They no longer defined one another perfectly. The darkness and bleakness of eternal *golus*, until the coming of the Messiah, was not the existential reality of the immigrant Jew.

In America there was hope, opportunity, even prosperity. Soft beds, enough food, safety. This was not *golus* in its heartrending, ultimate blackness. If the truth be told, this was Paradise, and the only way to resolve this contradiction was humor. The word began to be used lightly, frivolously. A family that moved from its familiar neighborhood would talk of being in *golus*.

Sholom Aleichem, too, believed that *golus* came to an end in America. There, as he wrote in a famous lullaby, Jews needed to have no fear, were rich, and ate *challah* (Sabbath bread) on weekdays. The end of *golus* for Sholom Aleichem was the end of the physical misery that crushed the lives and spirits of the Jews in the shtetl. Although his own experience of America was disappointing, he assumed that his fellow Jews would bring their intellectual baggage with them—the wit, the absurdity, the passionate engagement with ideas that fed the endless spring from which he drew his inspiration.

Franzos turned the image upside down. He cannot conceive of a change in the Jewish condition without a change in their ideas. Indeed, he views Jewish learning as a great cage that prevents the self-realization of Jews. One of the important stock scenes in Franzos's work is the encounter with nature by a ghetto Jew, where the sweetness, light, and freedom of a meadow are made to contrast with the cramped ghetto streets. In several stories he places the scenes of intellectual liberation in the open air, in an open field, in the ruins of a castle open to the sky. The openness of nature comes to stand for the expansion of the mind in a free world of learning.

In some unimaginable way the visions of both Sholom Aleichem and Franzos were realized in America, where the apparently immutable characteristics of Jewish life in Eastern Europe suffered a remarkable sea change. Imperceptible at first, as shtetl life seemed to be reconstituted whole across an ocean, the forces of the new world rapidly altered what appeared to be a powerful, stable culture. In a few decades Yiddish became moribund, the religion of the shtetl was honed into conformity with middle-class America, the constellation of family forces changed, Jewish talent left the ghetto, and even the question of how to remain a Jew became problematical.

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Fulfilling the Franzos vision, the Jews of America wholeheartedly entered American society. They embraced Debs and Whitman, perhaps, instead of Schiller and Goethe, but they certainly abandoned the shtetl. Sholom Aleichem's premonition—that the safety and plenty of America meant the end of the complex Jewish life he had chronicled—has only become a source of concern now that the last authentic survivals of the shtetl have vanished. The old quarrels are forgotten. One doesn't struggle with ghosts; one placates them and lures them back.

As the cradle of Western Jewry, the shtetl has exerted a powerful if invisible influence on Jews everywhere, because its ideas were not left behind. Even those who fled in rebellion could not divest themselves of every shred of their past. And for the ordinary emigrants, the shtetl culture was as much a part of their baggage as their feather beds and candlesticks. However attenuated the minutiae of religious observance may have become, the attitudes of Jewish life as developed in Eastern Europe remained firm. Handed on in other languages, in other countries, they have become the unexamined bedrock on which the assumptions and principles of Western Jewish life rest today.

Now at a distance of three-quarters of a century, we can perceive what a network of contradictions the shtetl supported. Yet, while its institutions collapsed in the West, some of its intangible qualities—its skepticism and its superstitions, its scale of values, its mode of thinking—showed remarkable resilience. As they struggle with its reinvention, American Jews need not worry about building a monument to the shtetl. They have only to look within themselves to find its heritage still valiantly alive.

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The Return of the Repressed

IRVING FELDMAN

Really, it was no big deal.
Just a few guys in fatigues
back from the fringes of empire,
wandering through the crowds of the capital.
Their war had been over so long,
no one remembered it.
Who needed that old crap anyway?

Of course,
the antiquarians made a fuss.
With live specimens and a public issue,
at last they felt
contemporary.
Which just goes to show.

Wars come and wars go.
So what else is new?

When they started going ape in front
of the unknown soldier's monument,
we gave them and their wounds
one-way tickets back
and all the old medals lying around.
Really.
I was happy to kick in my last one.

IRVING FELDMAN's most recent collections are *New and Selected Poems* and *Teach Me, Dear Sister*, both from Viking/Penguin. He teaches English at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

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The Wrecker Driver Foresees Your Death

David Baker

I don't drive for pleasure anymore

If you walked past the lot on any good Sunday,
stopped to stare, and jays were
flying anyway you turned
like blue flowers
tossed up to the wind and rolled over,
so light they never fell,
and the air was fruity with fresh-mown grass,

you could never know the horror of it.
Looking at the rows of cars wrinkled
like wads of paper,
windshields webbed with cracks,
oil still oozing from the fresher ones
hauled in the night before, you still could
not believe the pain. You would try to

hear them collide, perhaps, and might even
convince yourself you could.
You might see the black well of night
crossed with lights flashing
in your mind, or imagine yourself pushing

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a stuck door to help the dying
woman crying for you, holding up her damp stub,

the smell of singed hair thick
as honeysuckle, and far sweeter.
For that moment you would stand there
blackhearted, scared of your own mind,
the distant bells and slow
Sunday wind barely discernible,
the birds descending with their shadows,

and you would turn to go, scuffing
through the cut grass, your shoes slick with it.
You would go on like that
swearing to be more careful in your life—
swearing never to drive again,
or never to be so close to people they might die
weeping in your arms, or you in theirs,

each of these a promise you could never keep.

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The End of the Physician-Scientist?

GORDON N. GILL

In 1966 when I was a medical resident and first went to a medical meeting in Atlantic City, clinical investigation in American medicine was at its zenith. The lessons of World War II and of the National Foundation-March of Dimes, with its conquest of polio, had not been lost on the nation and on Congress, which had been pouring more and more money into the National Institutes of Health, community hospital construction, Veterans Administration hospitals, and medicare. Like the Apollo program to reach the moon, the war on disease was advancing on all fronts. The infrastructure of biomedical research had been put in place; clinical research centers had been built in many of the teaching hospitals of the major academic medical schools, and all the brightest young men—there were few women in medicine then, much less in medical research—were being recruited for federally funded postdoctoral research positions.

Although Atlantic City was faded and tawdry—everything was tacky-poor in those days before gambling arrived, after which everything became tacky-rich—it represented the pinnacle for a young physician possessed with what Tom Wolfe has since called "the right stuff." Each spring the physician-scientists of American medicine gathered there to present and to hear about the marvelously exciting new milestones in the march to conquer disease. The center of activity was Haddon Hall, an old and faded hotel, decorated in Victorian and German kitsch and designed to appeal to the lower-middle-class European immigrants who had gone there in the 1930s for their vacations from Philadelphia, Newark, and other decaying cities. The European promenade had been practiced on the boardwalk, and the proper, heavyset, darkly dressed European couples walked up and down and gazed at the gray Atlantic Ocean, the Crystal Pier (where a girl actually rode a horse off the end and into the ocean), the cheap jewelry shops, antique shops, and saltwater-taffy stores. By the time I arrived in 1966, the promenaders wore print dresses and brightly flowered shirts bulging over big bellies, and black

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teenagers roller-skated up and down the boardwalk. Benches along the boardwalk faced away from the ocean and toward tinsel storefronts with "For Sale" signs. Each spring for four days all the brightest and best in medical research arrived and loved it. The boardwalk filled up with men in academic attire. Navy-blue blazers, button-down shirts, khaki pants, and loafers replaced the flowered shirts, and the intense business of the slave market in medicine was conducted outside Haddon Hall. The papers presented by bright young men were intensely discussed and acknowledged, and jobs were offered to those completing their fellowships.

The Atlantic City meetings were sponsored by the Association of American Physicians, the American Society for Clinical Investigation, and the American Federation for Clinical Research, known affectionately, and respectively, as the old turks, the young turks, and the young squirts. The Association of American Physicians was founded in 1884 by the small group of physicians who were more or less full-time teachers in American medical schools. Most medical schools were then staffed by volunteers, physicians in practice who taught by precept and example, and the number of full-time faculty at even the best schools could be counted on one's fingers. These dedicated and underpaid men—although all physicians were then underpaid by today's standards—gathered each year to hear talks that were largely descriptions of the manifestations and courses of diseases. There were few effective drugs or surgeries and no methods of measuring much of anything. Infectious diseases naturally assumed primary importance, and talks described the patterns of fever and pathological findings at autopsy. The natural history of disease was a primary topic of interest, and students learned how to make diagnoses and prognoses by taking a medical history and doing a physical examination. An amazing precision and degree of skill were attained so that disease processes and the spot in their natural progression could be well marked. The academic physicians were the best, and medical students respected these men just as medieval monks had respected their abbots.

Life as an intern and resident wasn't, in actuality, much different from the monastic life. One lived in the hospital, was always on duty, and thought of marriage only after his training was complete and his medical practice begun. Patients in university hospitals, which were usually large inner-city hospitals with large charity wards, did little better than those in other hospitals. Natural history was learned and skill in diagnosis was sharpened, but little could be done other than to mark the place in the course of disease of individual patients. Each year the intrepid band of academic professionals rode the train, some for two days, to meet and sustain each other, to search and listen for any hope of

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modifying the natural history of any of the diseases with which they struggled.

In the 1930s quantitation entered medicine, and the beginning of a new era was at hand. Since the days of Hippocrates, advances in health had largely been the result of natural selection and the work of sanitation engineers. Physicians were comforters and observers of the sick. Plagues swept over Europe and England for three hundred years following their introduction in 1347, killing from one-third to one-half the population. An incredible selection of good and vigorous immune systems had been made. Then people began to live in brick houses, and the fable of the three little pigs came true. Without thatched roofs and straw floors, the rats couldn't live so close to people, and the lice that lived on the rats and carried the plague bacillus couldn't bite the people and spread the scourge. Water sources were separated from waste, and the diarrheal diseases, which were the principal source of infant and childhood mortality, began to decline. Louis Pasteur, the best of the sanitation engineers, reinforced the idea of the microbial origin of infectious disease. By the early 1900s advances had been made: vaccination for smallpox was widely practiced; wounds were cleaned and sutured; surgery was safer and more bearable with anesthesia; sterility in the operating room was routine; physicians assisted at deliveries; and insulin was available to treat diabetics. Physicians couldn't measure much, however, and urine testing for glucose was still commonly performed by taste testing.

In the 1930s, after quantitation began, Peters and Van Slyke wrote a book describing the measurement of electrolytes in blood, and it was immediately obvious how much more could be learned about natural history and the changes in physiology that underlay it. Moreover, one could begin to think about repairing some defects and changing the natural histories of diseases. Sulfa drugs were becoming available, and even more potent antimicrobials were promised. Hormones were being extracted from animal endocrine glands, and changes in blood pressure, volume, and circulation were considered legitimate objects of study. The whole process was remarkably accelerated by World War II, during which trauma, malnutrition, and exposure to infectious diseases became routine over much of the world.

Because the new group of physicians wanted to measure something and change the natural history of disease, they didn't fit in with the existing organization. They wanted to present and hear quantitative, dynamic data and couldn't care less about pathological changes occurring at the end of the natural history of a disease. These physicians wanted their own meeting and their own society, so they joined the American Society for Clinical Investigation, founded in 1908 by a small

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group of physicians who were also dedicated to quantitation in medicine. They considered themselves the young turks. The Association of American Physicians naturally became the old turks. After the age of forty-five, one was considered too old to be a young turk and either retired or became an old turk. With the explosion in biomedical research, the exponential increase in knowledge, and the ability at last to treat patients and modify the natural history of disease, the young turks in turn became too elitist, too restrictive in membership to accommodate all the bright young men and women who were joining the expanding full-time faculties of American medical schools. The American Federation for Clinical Research was founded in 1941, and its members were promptly dubbed the young squirts because membership was open to all comers—to join, one only had to work in research, have a fellowship, write a paper, and retire from the organization at age forty-one.

By 1966 the annual meeting of the three societies was *the* scientific, professional, and social event of the year. Tacky Atlantic City was ideal. One was isolated from all distractions because almost no one had friends or relatives in Atlantic City and no spouse would want to go to such a godforsaken place. A physician could hear presentations of the most exciting research of the year, see the giants who were leading the major laboratory groups, spot the textbook writers who were assumed to be the most expert in their areas, and listen as the movers and shakers recruited the best to their institutions. The young turks were the tops. Only a select few were elected into membership, and the rising academics wanted that star in their crown. Membership not only allowed a physician to present his work at the young turks' part of the meeting but implied peer recognition of his achievements and contributions to new knowledge. A physician was admitted only by virtue of original investigation, and membership conferred an aura of the right stuff, plus advancement to tenure in one's institution. The department chairmen were old turks and were therefore allowed to wear tuxedos and to attend the members-only banquet. They were the policymakers, the wise old men, the textbook writers, and it was a thrill to rub elbows with them. For an aggressive young investigator, however, the goal was membership in the American Society for Clinical Investigation, and the newly elected young turks were the lions of the boardwalk.

Clinical investigation had made great strides. Antibiotics were numerous and proliferating, and no one doubted that all infections could one day be controlled by physicians, not just by sanitation engineers. Cardiac catheterization was routine, and circulatory dynamics could be quantitated; drugs and surgery for congenital or acquired heart disease could be rationally designed and tested. Hormones were widely available not only to treat deficiency states but also for birth control and

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control of inflammation—and the new technique of radioimmunoassay allowed precise measurement of each hormone even though it circulated as only one part in ten million in the plasma. The immune system was now a legitimate object of study; immunizations for infectious diseases were routine, and attempts to suppress overactivity of the immune system were under way. It was clear that in many diseases the Darwinian selection for active immune systems resulted in a too vigorous response so that normal body tissue was attacked as if it were a foreign invader, resulting in rheumatoid arthritis, glomerulonephritis, and thyroid disease. Moreover, the transplantation of organs was possible, provided the physician could suppress the normal immune system. No branch of medicine lacked for advances of this magnitude.

During the nineteen-year stewardship of James Shannon, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) increased its budget twentyfold. Medical school faculties, supported by research grants from NIH, spent more and more time in investigation. Promotions came not from teaching or patient care but from scholarship, from clinical investigation, from summaries of observations that were presented at Atlantic City and published in such prestigious journals as that of the society, the *Journal of Clinical Investigation.*

The American Society for Clinical Investigation was dominated by the major eastern medical schools, notably Harvard, and by the then lesser schools such as Yale and Johns Hopkins. A few outliers, such as San Francisco and Dallas, which were run by former residents of the eastern schools, outdid their origins in pushing their faculties toward membership in the society.

The groups standing on the boardwalk outside Haddon Hall belonged to the future. They wore their uniforms out of J. Press and Brooks Brothers with pride. They were training with the giants or were training the giants of the future. Physiology—medical physiology, that is—was king, and the war on disease was being won. It was exciting to walk down the boardwalk to Captain Starn's Restaurant for dinner—to see the giants of American medicine eating with their entourages of junior faculty members and fellows, to see even the giants throwing oyster crackers across the room at their friends—and then to go to a seedy strip show in Atlantic City. It was even more exciting to participate in the real work at Atlantic City, which was to hear new data, to intensely discuss new theories, to plan and modify one's own research in light of new information, and even to modify the way patients were diagnosed and managed. Investigation was principally clinical and immediately translatable into care of patients. There were, of course, many animal experiments presented and some grousing about rat doctors, but everyone accepted the need and validity of animal models for the study of

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physiology and disease. There was even some biochemistry, but it wasn't considered a major topic.

II

In the spring of 1983, I returned to the joint meeting, which was held not in Atlantic City but in Washington, D.C. In advance of the migration of the gamblers to Atlantic City, the academics had fled like a species changing habitat when a more dominant species occupies the same ecological niche. In the seventeen years since I first attended a meeting in Atlantic City, the academic physicians had also been displaced from their dominant position in biomedical research, although most of them did not yet recognize or acknowledge it. Washington had for several years replaced Atlantic City as the meeting place, with occasional rotations to the Far West to satisfy the increasingly large academic medical centers in Texas and California. The uniform was still the same: navy blazer, khaki pants and loafers, with some poplin suits for variety. Leisure suits, boots, string ties, and blue jeans were conspicuous by their absence, and one would never confuse the physicians with a lawyers' group, a business or sales group. Hair was still neat, beards uncommon or, when present, well trimmed, and men still greatly outnumbered women.

Some extracurricular activities persisted. The Yale group, who were inveterate bird-watchers in Atlantic City, still got up early in the morning and, led by Lish Atkins and Robert Berliner, explored the hills and fields around Washington for rare species just as they had done in the salt marshes outside Atlantic City. The Yale, Massachusetts General Hospital, and Johns Hopkins cocktail parties were still large affairs, with those attending reading like a who's who of American academic medicine. The NIH group still huddled together in discussions as though they found solace in each other's company when surrounded by so many university types who were paid more than government employees.

The program format wasn't much different from the one used in 1966. There were large plenary sessions, award presentations, and subspecialty sessions. Poster sessions were new, but everyone was used to that by now, and it was generally recognized that a storefront "show and tell" was as effective for information transfer and exposure as a ten-minute oral presentation. Now that times were harder for funding of biomedical research, more time was devoted to bemoaning the poverty of the research establishment, to hearing a projected budget from the new NIH director, James Wyngaarden, and to being exhorted to contact one's congressman.

The election of new young turks was still greeted with enthusiasm

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and congratulations, although the narrow corridors and confining space of an urban hotel permitted less lionization than the boardwalk and Atlantic Ocean. The old turks still dressed up in tuxedos for their more and more expensive dinner, eating rubber chicken at thirty-eight dollars a plate in order to see and be seen with their exalted peers.

Because the uniforms and people looked so similar, the ways in which the meeting changed went largely unnoticed. The division heads at my university recently met to discuss how to encourage the young postdoctoral fellows and faculty to attend, present their papers, and participate in the annual meeting, once the pinnacle of American medicine. It was suggested that a push would be most appropriate for the next meeting held on the West Coast, when travel would be less prohibitive; or the department could supplement travel expenses for young people presenting papers. The consensus was that the meeting had declined in quality, prestige, and importance. The favored explanation was that the subspecialty meetings, which had each become large and separate, were the major gatherings of peers and that, for their education and advancement, young people now much preferred to go to them than to a general meeting. The annual cardiology meeting, for example, outdrew the three-society meeting. Everyone appreciated that cardiac research was a vast and varied enterprise that had little in common with immunology, which was also a vast and varied enterprise. Although the faculty members in my department serve as attending physicians on the general medical wards, they all admit that their skills as general physicians decline each year and that their time and energies are largely devoted to their own subspecialties.

No one seemed ready to consider that young men and women with the right stuff no longer went to any of these meetings. Nor did they wear the uniform or even work in academic departments of medicine. The intense young men making the major new discoveries in medicine had their own uniform, which consisted of long hair, frequently of unkempt beards, and Levi's, the older and more faded the better. This dress code is dictated in part by economics, as these people are woefully underpaid, but also no self-respecting person with the right stuff would speak before an audience at Cold Spring Harbor or Squaw Valley wearing a tie. In Washington much lip service was paid to molecular biology, but the molecular biologists—especially the youngest and brightest—weren't there and probably had never heard of the turks, young or old. Few people, if any, recognized that clinical investigation had become the development stage of science and that fundamental research and biological observations rarely originated any longer in medical schools. In England and on the European continent, the division between basic science and clinical medicine was largely completed ten years ago. It

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was also occurring in America, but few seemed ready to acknowledge that the clinician-scientist was now the clinician-applier of basic science or that the physician-basic researcher was unlikely to keep up, much less surpass, his colleagues in pure basic science.

III

Cold Spring Harbor is located far out on Long Island in the midst of old New York estates and dirt-poor oyster fishermen. A converted estate and some Rockefeller Foundation money received in the late 1940s provided a summer gathering place for a small group of scientists interested in such arcane subjects as phage genetics. The average citizen wouldn't have thought much would come of the study of viruses that infected bacteria, but the group led by Max Delbrück thought that the study of a delimited and precise life form just might provide insight into genetics and inheritance not possible through the study of more complex organisms such as bacteria. Study of humans was beyond their wildest fantasy; there were too many variables ever to unravel the basic rules governing replication, recombination, and inheritance of genes. Like several of the early molecular biologists, Delbrück was trained as a physicist, but, after early work in that field, he drifted toward the less precise but more palpable world of biology. Phage were one of the simplest forms of life, and their replication depended on so few genes that it appeared possible at last to begin to understand how inheritance really worked. James Watson trained with Salvador Luria, a member of this phage group, and absorbed from Luria and his colleagues their intense interest in genetics and inheritance. I remember first hearing Watson speak at Yale shortly after he wrote *The Double Helix*, a gossipy personal reminiscence of the discovery of the structure of DNA. He had sparse hair that stood up in all directions and was dressed in a poorly fitting, rumpled suit. He recounted that, upon his arrival in Cambridge as a bright, brash young postdoctoral student, he was to work with John Kendrew. Kendrew, who, along with Max Perutz, brought X-ray crystallography of proteins into the forefront of science, had been offered a whale as a specimen for dissection. The whale had washed onto a beach in England. Watson told quite humorously of his horror at the thought of hacking away with an ax at a dead whale to obtain myoglobin for X-ray crystallographic analysis. He chose instead to work with Francis Crick on the X-ray crystallography of deoxyribonucleic acid, or DNA. Everyone understood what he was really saying: proteins were perhaps interesting for hackers, but the real work for a phage geneticist was genetics and inheritance—and DNA was at the center of the action. When Oswald Avery, working with painstaking care at the Rockefeller

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Institute, showed unequivocally in 1944 that pure DNA could be added to rough pneumococci, thus causing them to acquire a heritable smooth coat, it became clear that genetic information was present in DNA and only in DNA. The Avery experiment was a classic, and after it, few could doubt that DNA contained genes and was central to genetics and inheritance. The next question was how DNA worked.

Francis Crick and James Watson, at the Cavendish Laboratories at Cambridge, answered the central question of inheritance by analysis of X-ray crystallographic pictures of DNA. Their letter to the journal *Nature* in 1953, describing the double helix structure of DNA and the base pairing rules, was immediately recognized as a milestone in science that competed in importance with the work of Newton, Darwin, and Einstein. They initiated the golden age of molecular biology, in which the fundamentals of inheritance and cell function were unraveled—messenger RNA, transfer RNA, ribosomes, and the genetic code—and the broad processes of replication were painted in bold strokes.

The summer meetings at Cold Spring Harbor became larger and more varied. Meetings still concentrated on phage genetics, but now there were gatherings to discuss DNA synthesis, transcription of RNA, protein synthesis, and viruses. The shirt-sleeve and outdoor atmosphere of Cold Spring Harbor, where everyone stayed in bunkhouses and ate cafeteria style while looking out over Long Island Sound, was ideal as a setting to soften the intensity of the fiercely competitive field that molecular biology was becoming. Everyone knew about the long days and nights, the failed experiments, the experiments that worked but didn't give the expected answer; the ideal was to present one's work in a casual but tightly reasoned manner. Originality was immediately recognized, new information incorporated, and the next question asked. Only the best was expected. Presentations of masses of data or elegant proofs of already-accepted principles were immediately discarded along with the presenter. Congratulations were never given, but important work was rewarded by intense discussion with the presenter at coffee break and over lunch. Casualness, clarity, and—most important—originality were the things most valued at Cold Spring Harbor. No one doubted that these investigators were dealing with the primal facets of the life process itself.

The scientists and the questions they were asking were distinct from the physicians and their questions of clinical investigation. Everyone assumed basic science was essential to clinical medicine, but few seriously believed that there would be any ready transfer of fundamental information, such as the use of the structure of DNA in a clinic. Despite this belief, American medical schools did take more interest in biochemical science. In the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s, physicians

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began to practice biochemistry, cellular biology, and immunology. Animal and cellular model systems became the norm, not the exception; and with the use of such model systems, variables could be more tightly controlled, answers more unequivocally formulated, and concepts transposed to the next higher order of organization. The new young investigators, who now did their postdoctoral fellowships with biochemists and cell biologists, brought their recently acquired skills into clinical departments. Of course, some grousing took place at the annual meeting about the decline in human studies and the increasingly smaller percentage of papers presented that dealt with "clinical" investigation. In fact, Alvan Feinstein, an epidemiologist from Yale, analyzed the subject matter of papers presented and concluded that "clinical" was rarely the appropriate word.

No one was really unhappy with this trend, which was recognized as an adaptation, a way of keeping up, a method and strategy entirely appropriate to the conquest of disease. Studies of the immune system using mouse models and interbreeding to identify gene loci controlling immunity were relevant to transplantation and to immune disease; characterization of hormone receptors and measurement of these were relevant to breast cancer and its management; identification of abnormal hemoglobins would one day allow treatment of sickle-cell disease and thalassemia; study of lipoprotein metabolism would one day prevent atherosclerosis—the list went on and on, and the intellectual ferment in the major academic medical centers became more intense. Major recruitments were directed toward clinicians who were also basic scientists, who could bring the excitement of the relevant biochemistry and cell biology to the bedside teaching rounds. Such knowledge was truly helpful in understanding the deranged biochemistry of disease.

Although the term *molecular* was widely used, real molecular biologists were a distinct and separate group. Their concerns were still truly basic and had little place in medical schools. Gene structure, DNA replication, ribosome structure, transcription, protein synthesis—studies of fundamental processes of life were rightly the concerns of a separate discipline. There was, as usual, more than enough to do, and both groups were making historic strides in what Lewis Thomas called the youngest science. Two unrelated forces, however, were operating to change science in academic departments of medicine and in the world of molecular biology.

IV

The first force for change was practical and economic. When I was a medical intern in 1964, the salary was a grand two hundred dollars per

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month. We were too busy to agitate for more—besides, this was more than former interns had been paid, and we also were on leave from the hospital for twelve hours out of each forty-eight. By the 1970s no good medical student chose an internship program that required him to be on duty more than one night in three, and one night in four was more attractive still. Salaries of up to twenty thousand dollars per year, a living wage, were not uncommon for residents. Coincident with this, the payback provision of NIH fellowships was established, which stated that for each year of fellowship training support, the postdoctoral fellow must pay back one year as a full-time academician or return the money. The program was described as indentured servitude, but the federal government was adamant—no training support for physicians who choose to go into practice and become well-to-do. Moreover, fellowship stipends were kept low because financial restraints were placed on federal support of research.

By 1976 every resident in internal medicine faced a choice. He could enter the practice of medicine and double his salary to forty thousand dollars, or he could enter a postdoctoral training program, learn the techniques and joys of science, and halve his salary to ten thousand dollars. If he wasn't as creative as he hoped in the laboratory or if the love for patient care, which he had aspired to for most of his life, was stronger, he had to arrange to repay the ten grand. Often, with a wife and young family, the resident made the obvious choice. Articles began to appear in the *New England Journal of Medicine* charting the decline of M.D.'s entering biomedical research. Advisory boards decried this tendency to NIH administrators, but they had little recourse in an era of declining support for the enterprise of biomedical research. Things looked brighter for graduate students receiving their Ph.D. degrees. To receive a Ph.D., a student must have already demonstrated some degree of originality and productivity. Besides, these students had no alternative. The salary of ten thousand dollars a year at least doubled their stipends as graduate students. The economics alone explains why most postdoctoral programs were filled with Ph.D.'s and why M.D.'s in research became an endangered species. The few M.D.'s who entered postdoctoral training programs supplemented their income by moonlighting in local emergency rooms, an additional, often exhausting burden.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, NIH was filled with bright young physicians. Not only was this the mecca of exciting research, but time there counted as military service. NIH was a unique national resource. It was the central training ground for scientific medicine, and most physician-scientists trained either at NIH or with mentors who had trained there. It was the one institution where science was central and a

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physician was expected to work in a laboratory first and at the bedside second. Physicians received training there that they had never had before. If a physician was good, he could continue his work. Medical schools were more than eager to hire him and to help him in every way possible with his work in both science and medicine. A physician could win research grants that would carry indirect costs and general funds to the institution, or he could earn a research career development award and pay his own salary, in which case the university was out little cash and basked in the aura of the physician's achievements.

When it came, the fall was so sudden it was wrenching. Suddenly there was no more war and no more draft; less, not more, pay; poorer prospects for research grant support; and less and less associated monies available to institutions. Research wasn't on the way out, but the participation of M.D.'s in it was. People didn't leave suddenly: the entrances were blocked, but there were no rushes for the exits, so it took a few years for the full effects of attrition to be felt. Ph.D's were still entering science in greater and greater numbers. There was always a need to care for the sick, and medical schools began to hire more clinicians and fewer physician-scientists. Not only were there fewer physician-scientists available who were scientifically trained and truly talented, but with financial stringencies an important consideration, a clinician at least earned his own salary.

The second force for change in the character of academic departments of medicine was perhaps more profound. The face and nature of molecular biology and true basic science changed with the advent of recombinant DNA technology; it changed so fast that, without a large cadre of bright young M.D.'s in fellowship training, the revolution bypassed the medical world.

From the days of Watson, Crick, Delbrück, and the phage geneticists onward, a profound interest had developed in the structure of genes and of DNA. Progress was real but slow. Progress in the field entered a phase of logarithmic growth with the discovery of ways to cut, copy, and read DNA sequences. It became possible to *work* with genes—to study their organization, clone them, cut them, splice them, rearrange them, mutate them, transfer them. Bacteria factories could make insulin or growth hormones for human use. Vaccines could be developed by amplifying the viral genes in bacteria. New viruses could be constructed to use for cross-immunity, as had been done so crudely by Edward Jenner and Albert Sabin. The practical implications of genetic engineering became enormous: creation of new vaccines and benign viruses; manufacture of hormones and drugs for human use; engineering of nitrogen-fixing genes into bacteria that could grow in corn as well as in legumes and require less fertilizer; development of bacteria capable of digesting oil

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spills—the list is limited only by human imagination. Genetic engineering companies proliferated, and the staid scientific journal *Nature* began to run a column of the stock exchange price quotes for the major genetic engineering companies. Professors who lived on modest academic salaries in biochemistry and biology departments rushed to establish their own companies. Eager venture capitalists pushed money on them, and both dreamed of making their fortunes as they went public or were bought by a larger company.

Unexpected insights into genetics and evolution occurred. Genes were discovered to be split and to contain their final information in interrupted segments that had to be cut apart and properly stitched together. They were found to jump, to rearrange in such ways as to create the enormous diversity of the immune system, and oncogenes, or cancer-causing genes, were found to be derived by minimal change from ubiquitous and ancient cellular genes.

In this explosive field the dependence on new techniques was absolute, and the techniques themselves were changing as rapidly as were concepts of gene structure and organization. One could hardly afford to work outside the major academic and research centers if he wanted to keep up and make a noteworthy contribution. Progress required large interactive groups to provide full use of the new cloning technologies—sequencing, synthesizing, splicing, rearranging, and transferring of genes. It was more than a full-time job, and the gene machine companies added a new dimension of competence toward practical goals.

A revolution had occurred in science, if one defines a revolution as a turn or a rapid change in the way things are done. The role of the academic departments of medicine and that of physicians had changed. Their role now was to apply these advances, to test them for efficacy and safety in humans, perhaps to use and test them in model systems with animals or cells as their "basic" science. In any event, it was clear that the molecular biologists now dominated all biological science.

There was a third force for change in academic medicine, but compared to these first two, its contribution is more difficult to measure. Coincident with the malaise of the young, who were disenchanted by the Vietnam War, a tide of anti-intellectualism spread throughout the Western countries. Congress and the federal incentives were pushing medical schools toward family-practice training and the delivery of health care to underserved areas. Medical students began to spend the summer in Appalachia, not in a laboratory. Medical school curricula introduced courses in social and environmental aspects of medicine and decreased time devoted to the biochemical bases of disease. Students were called to do something practical, helpful, noble. A ride with the

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visiting nurse was more important than a thesis project on some minor point of purely academic interest. Contrary to popular belief, most medical students at least begin as idealists with a sincere intent to aid the unfortunate. The role model to emulate became more and more the family practitioner, not the academic scientist—that is, the deliverer of health care, not the dispassionate scholar.

V

In his presidential address to the American Society for Clinical Investigation in 1983, Dr. Louis Sherwood described the goals for leaders of academic departments of medicine. The foremost goal, he stated, was to provide excellent clinical care to ill patients so that medical students and house staffs could learn the best medical practices. It is an admirable goal, and the audience agreed as surely as a chamber of commerce audience agrees with a mayor extolling the attraction of new industry and tourism to his or her city. I found it ironic that the leader of the young turks extolled a virtue that had surely been praised by the leaders of the old turks in the 1920s and 1930s. This has always been the goal of teachers in medical schools, but in earlier years the young turks had a special mission and a new dimension to add. I do not know if Dr. Sherwood appreciated how clearly he was describing the situation as it now exists, but he is shrewd and, without pointing out the obvious, acknowledged the new division of responsibilities. Physicians are to take care of the sick, and now that the new biology is clinically relevant, Ph.D's who are trained properly can devote the uninterrupted time and energy required to sustain continued advances in molecular biology. Responsibilities have been divided as they were in Europe a decade ago, and physicians must go back to caring for the sick and carrying out clinical trials. A few of the large academic centers were committed to molecular biology, but it was mostly contract work (a physician with a large grant and a laboratory staffed by young, newly trained molecular biologists provides leadership, financial support, and identification of important problems; but the details, which are the heart and soul and bread and butter of research, are left to those working in the laboratory).

So the audience, in their casual academic attire, had a new mission: a return to the roles of the past. Most had already reverted, and the program of the meeting contained little of fundamental importance or originality. In fact, the "basic" science presented had little to do with patient care and even less to do with frontiers of genetic engineering—it was doubly damned. Large areas of inquiry had been bypassed, but this was not apparent to the newcomers.

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For the tumor virology meeting at Cold Spring Harbor, the participants dress for the most part in blue jeans and faded shirts. They look down on the genetic engineers as practical busyworkers, even though both use the same techniques to investigate the fundamental properties of living cells. The average income of the participants is less than half that of the Washington crowd, but their enthusiasm for science is vastly greater. These inheritors of the school of phage genetics are still judged solely on the originality of their findings. Use of exquisite and difficult techniques is assumed, and the description of a technique is listened to only if it is new and someone can immediately see a use for it in his own work. The discovery and characterization of oncogenes is moving rapidly; it is clear to this group that the solution to the cancer problem has begun.

The idea of oncogenes is not new, being at least fifteen years old. Recent findings indicating that human cancers contain genes that correspond to genes of tumor viruses have merged many separate trails of inquiry. Tumor viruses are able to transform normal cells into malignant ones and do so by carrying genes captured initially from their host normal cells. The tumor viruses have been like the bacterial phage—small and contained enough to study in depth. They cause tumors because they have captured a gene from a normal cell and subverted it to their own use. In an elegant way these viruses have cloned cancer-causing genes, and it is now evident that in human cancers these same genes have been subtly altered so that, instead of dictating their normal function, they impose malignancy on the cell. The tools are available. What remains is to determine how these normal cellular genes are altered and how this alteration leads to cancer.

In science, peer recognition is a powerful force. Although few scientists are remembered after retirement, recognition of their creativity and originality while they are active is their highest reward. The ideas and concepts shine with their own light, and at Cold Spring Harbor the casual presentation masks an enormous intensity. In answer to a challenging question, a speaker will suddenly list ten elegant control experiments to rule out artifacts and ten subsequent experiments to extrapolate the findings to their full importance. Recognition of the right stuff is palpable in the intensity of discussion after oral presentations. No one pauses for rest; everyone wants new approaches and new techniques in order to leapfrog to the answer to the next important question. Today the brightest and best are recruited on the green lawns of Cold Spring Harbor, just as they once were on the boardwalk of Atlantic City.

The speakers at Cold Spring Harbor would graciously and elegantly speak if invited to address the young turks, but it is unlikely they would stay to hear the other talks. A few physicians don Levi's and go to Cold

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Spring Harbor, but mostly as listeners, not serious contributors.

Like it or not, the separation of physicians and scientists is well advanced in America. This is not to imply that physicians are not well trained in science—quite the contrary. Physicians are highly trained in science and use it in every facet of medical practice, from biochemical tests, to monitoring devices, to nuclear magnetic resonance imaging, to pharmacology. The practice of medicine is the practice of science. This, too, has contributed to the separation. Just as the practice of molecular biology requires long hours and knowledge of rapidly changing technology, so does the practice of medicine require much time and effort to assimilate and use the new technology and advances. Partial attention to either science or medicine is no longer enough.

It is likely that the separation of functions was inevitable and that the two paths will not again merge. It seems ironic that a separation occurred when physicians became scientists and when the work of basic scientists became clinically relevant, but such was the case, and there is no going back. I do not think the young turks can ever regain the unmeasurable but very real excitement of presenting truly original work; I do not think the excitement from the intense questioning of the material presented at meetings will replace polite congratulations on a good presentation; I do not think creative young men and women will look with awe at the giants of biomedical research. My department of medicine will probably be lucky to attract any young physicians who want to do, or are trained to do, real basic science, and the department should help send those who do to Cold Spring Harbor, not to Washington. Physicians already follow Dr. Sherwood's exhortation to tend to their patients and will continue to do so to a larger and larger degree. No one wishes to mourn the past. The new division of labor will likely bring about real benefits for the sick and afflicted more rapidly than ever before possible. It is worth marking, though, an era, a spirit, a time when those in academic medicine rightly or wrongly believed themselves in touch, in the mainstream of originality and creativity, when they were excited about what they were doing and religiously devoted to investigation; a time when this excitement was communicated to medical students, to the talented younger people; a time when one looked to colleagues for the next advance, the next theory, the next hypothesis, the next breakthrough. The advances in science will still be taught, but now those in academic medicine will look to their colleagues, not for exciting scientific ideas, but instead for ideas about delivery of health care, new diagnostic tests, new drugs for clinical use, faculty salary plans, hospitals, and medicare. As the private practice of medicine becomes more restrictive, academic medicine may again look more attractive to residents, but they will enter as academic physicians, not as physician-scientists.

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"English" and the Perils of Formalism

E. D. HIRSCH, JR.

RECENTLY I WAS ASKED TO ADDRESS a meeting of heads of English departments from all over the country. An assignment like that, when educational reform is in the air, is bound to focus one's thoughts on the purposes of "English" in society. Neither I nor the members of my audience were trained to consider such questions. In our graduate-school days few of us heard or read about the uses of "English." If we were told anything at all about our purposes, we were told about private aims such as understanding human nature, gaining wisdom, and, most of all, appreciating literary craft. For my own part, and I think my attitude was quite typical, those humanistic purposes were enough to sustain my enthusiasm for teaching and writing. I took for granted that the aim of "English" in the high schools and colleges was to give our students the same humanistic insights that we had received. Any suggestion that our profession was instituted to play a public, even political, role would have seemed foreign to the humanistic and aesthetic orientation of English studies.

The current isolation of literary study from larger social purposes has recently induced some leading scholars in English to ponder our reasons for existing. (I am thinking particularly of Richard Ohmann, Wayne Booth, and Gerald Graff, and there are others as well.) Our professional history has been documented in Arthur Applebee's excellent account of English teaching in America, *Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English*. My remarks to the assembled English department heads, on which this essay is based, was in this recent tradition of self-examination. But instead of dealing with the internal development of English as a profession, I decided to discuss the external context out of which we arose. The external history of "English" had forced itself on my attention because my work on composition had taken me into such extraliterary subjects as the sociology of language and the history of literacy. To my surprise, and somewhat to my disappointment, I reached the conclusion that "English" is essentially a nationalistic subject. Its origin and its

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continuing social function give it closer connections with a specifically national culture than with literature conceived broadly as one of the humanities.

"English" in England and America, "German" in Germany, "French" in France, and so on, developed out of a modern need to provide young people with a new kind of broad-scale acculturation into national society. In earlier, pre-Gutenberg days, such acculturation, necessary in all human societies, was accomplished through local, oral culture. (Of course, I do not speak here of the educated few in the Middle Ages and later, who became literate in Latin after learning the local mores and dialects.) Starting in the Renaissance, when European districts began to consolidate their fragments into larger political units, the agency for transcending local culture was a national written language. In France, as Furet and Ozouf have shown in detail, the policy of all French central governments, both before and after the Revolution, was to enforce the teaching of the national language in the schools—a policy that often met with bitter local resistance. (See *Reading and Writing: Literacy in France from Calvin to Jules Ferry.*) The enforcement of national laws, the raising of national armies, and the regulation of national economies all depended on stable common languages.

Before a national written language could be taught, it had to be formed. Choices had to be made between competing grammatical and lexical candidates. Schoolmasters and grammarians had to reach agreement about spelling (orthography) and pronunciation (orthoepy). This artificial process of language normalization has been universal for all national written languages. It took place just a few decades ago in Norway. It is taking place now in the younger nations of Africa. In Britain the process of normalization, after gathering force in the seventeenth century, reached a crescendo in the eighteenth century. Probably it was no accident that English as a British university subject was instituted in the 1760s, when the written language was being more vigorously normalized than ever before. Hugh Blair, the first professor of "English"—that is, of "Rhetoric and *Belles Lettres*"—was a contemporary of Dr. Johnson, an important dictionary maker. Blair was in Edinburgh. "English" began as a university subject after the written language had become regularized and after schooling in the associated cultural traditions had become broadly national in scope. Blair, a Scot, lectured mainly on English writers like Addison, and not on Scottish writers like Dunbar.

Elsewhere in the Europe of the eighteenth century, the national written languages were being taught more widely and vigorously than ever before. All modern nations have depended on linguistic and cultural normalization within their borders. The apparent exceptions to

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this principle—the multilingual nations of Belgium and Switzerland—are small countries where the disunifying effects of multilingualism have been neutralized by intensive educational systems. These insure a high level of biliteracy and therefore a high degree of effective communication between the citizens of the nation. (Biliteracy is to be carefully distinguished from so-called bilingualism.) The effective functioning of every modern nation depends upon a national culture that is associated with the artifice of a national written language. That people know the same traditions and speak, read, and write Polish inside the Polish border and that they know Hungarian inside Hungary are not the results of natural, untended linguistic developments, but of carefully nurtured systems of national schooling.

In short, language making and culture making are artifices that have accompanied the making of nations. On this point I shall quote briefly from the distinguished Soviet Russian sociolinguist M. M. Guxman:

> One should not separate the formation of a written language from the activity of normative theoreticians, from the creation of normative grammars and first dictionaries, or from the activity of language societies, academies, etc. The negative sides of this normalization in the history of individual languages are widely known. The normalization of the language in 16- and 17th century Italy or France was of interest undoubtedly to a relatively narrow social stratum. However, the formation of a new type of written language is impossible without conscious normalization, without theoretical comprehension of the norm, and codification of definite rules of pronunciation, usage, and inflection.

In our own country, Noah Webster's language publications, which started in 1783 and culminated in the great *American Dictionary of the English Language* of 1828, were declarations of cultural and linguistic independence that reflected our political independence. Webster was the George Washington of the American subject of "English," and his American *Spelling Book* alone sold sixty million copies before 1890. He was shrewdly conscious of the connections between language making, culture making, and nation making. Because of Webster and other educators who thought as he did, "English" in America has been a repository not only of our national language but also of our national traditions and values. The connections between language, schooling, culture, and nationhood were understood not just by Webster but by Herman Melville, and William McGuffey, and many, many others. They recognized that our dependence upon the national schools was even greater in this heterogeneous country than in the nations of Europe.

These early educators recognized that because we had abjured the common traditions of an established national church, we had all the more self-consciously to make our own national culture. The schools of America became the national church for what has been called our "civil

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religion." "English," along with history, served as the principal school subjects that acculturated young people into the adult ethos and the affairs of the nation. "English" introduced our youth into our national linguistic conventions, stories, and traditions—in short, into the shared culture that enables citizens within a large modern nation to communicate with each other, live together peacefully, and work together productively.

With these remarks as historical background, allow me to turn to the theme of formalism and its perils for the profession of "English." Literary formalism stresses the aesthetic side of literature. But the more important cultural manifestation of formalism in America I would call "educational formalism." By this I mean the theory that the aim of education in the schools, and particularly in English classes, is to develop large generalized skills. The aim of "English," according to this view, is to teach students *how* to read (including how-to-read literature) and *how* to write, and these not primarily for the particular substance of the texts read, for these can be any appropriate texts, but rather for the sake of learning general skills for later use outside the school.

The notion that reading and writing are generalized skills has been an attractive theory in many countries, but especially in the United States. Formalism has served the very American ideal of practical efficiency. What could be more efficient than to learn a habitual skill that could be transferred to an indefinite number of future tasks? Another attraction of educational formalism has been its concord with the characteristic American ideals of diversity and pluralism. What could be more democratic and federalist than to leave the actual contents of teaching up to our diverse local districts? Any appropriate content will serve to teach the skills of reading and writing. This theory of instruction has dominated not only composition courses but reading courses as well.

More recently, the theory of educational formalism has dominated the teaching of literature. In 1938 the theory attached itself to literary study in America. That was the publication year of the great textbook by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren: *Understanding Poetry*—the most influential literary textbook of our time. Brooks and Warren are usually associated with aesthetic formalism, the idea that the essence of literature is to be found in its artistic form. But that New-Critical doctrine was not the chief attraction of *Understanding Poetry*, nor was aesthetic formalism the chief influence of the book on American education.

Let me say at once that Brooks and Warren were not educational formalists. On the contrary, they had strong cultural commitments that happened to include a commitment to aesthetic formalism. Probably the chief merit that educators saw in aesthetic formalism was its political and

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cultural neutrality. They could argue that it wasn't the content of literature that was being taught in the schools, but rather the total form of complex works of art. That claim was useful in the eternal controversies with parents over the contents of the English curriculum. But probably the main attraction of New Criticism in the schools was the usefulness of its methods for carrying out the principles of educational formalism.

Since the essence of literature according to Brooks and Warren consists in formal relationships, the ability to read literature would consist in mastering its formal logic and grammar. That was indeed the principle on which *Understanding Poetry* was organized; each section of the book connected particular formal traits of literature with particular skills to be learned. Although Brooks and Warren did not explicitly recommend the theory of educational formalism, educators who adapted New Criticism to the schools conceived that literary competence was analogous to competence in reading and writing. When applied to the teaching of literature, educational formalism required of students no specific prior information. Students from the most diverse backgrounds could be accommodated. Such a concept has been attractive to all of us who believe in the traditional American ideal of universal education. We conceived literary competence to be a skill that could be acquired through the study of any appropriate content, and we could leave the choice of that content, in good federalist fashion, to local determination.

Only recently have the technical defects of a skills approach to reading and writing begun to come to light. I shall describe some of those technical defects presently, but I should like to comment further upon the historical context of this educational theory when applied to "English." In the recent past, there has seemed to be enough truth in the idea that literacy is a transferable set of skills to make educational formalism a respectable theory to hold. One should add that it has also been a safe theory to hold. Specialists in reading or writing or literature who adopt formalistic theories need not commit themselves to any particular contents or values. They can present themselves as technicians who remain above the cultural battle. This posture of neutral expertness is nowhere better illustrated than in official curriculum guides to English (for instance, the official guides of California) that mention no work, no period, no author.

In earlier days we took a different view of teaching "English." Although certain technical aspects of reading and writing (such as, phonics and penmanship) had always been understood to be primary, the cultural side of English teaching used to get at least equal attention. Hugh Blair's rhetorical lectures, immensely influential in this country during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were introductions both to the skills of composition and to the classics of literature. Our old

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school readers, like the McGuffey and the Baker-Thorndike readers, were self-consciously devoted not just to reading skills but to the greatest authors, the noblest moral principles, and the most inspiring stories. In earlier days we did not separate technical skills from the acculturative side of English. But in our own day, after fifty years of the dominance of educational formalism and despite the advances we have made in reading research and in educating the so-called disadvantaged, we find a decline in SAT scores and an increase in cultural fragmentation.

I am alarmed at the complacent attitude of many intellectuals toward cultural fragmentation. Carried far enough, it leads to active hostility and violence between groups in our nation who cannot effectively communicate with one another. The danger of such conflict is greatest when the groups speak different languages. Constant civil hostility could be the fruit of the policy of so-called bilingualism in California and Texas, two states where the Spanish-speaking populations are large enough to polarize social and political life. The other danger is less dramatic, but closely connected with the original acculturative aims of "English." Our continuing failure to achieve a high level of national literacy will insure a lack of subtlety in the communications that can be transmitted widely by means of the national language. That will continue to debase not only the level of general "culture," but also the level of political discussion and of technical and economic effectiveness. The fastest and best way for a culture to adjust to new developments in technology is for its members to be *culturally* literate. Narrow technological literacy may be short-lived in a rapidly changing world. An effective technical training manual in a new subject requires in readers a large domain of shared background knowledge that is essential to true literacy. We all know that more is at stake in raising the level of national literacy than in enabling a widespread discussion of novels and poems.

For several years now, researchers have agreed that television is not the major cause of inadequate schooling in our country, though it has played a significant role. Rather, the major cause has been the dispersal of the school curriculum. (For the latest of many such studies, see: H. J. Walberg and T. Shanahan, "High School Effects on Individual Students," in *Educational Researcher*, August–September 1983. This article reanalyzes and summarizes earlier data on twenty-five thousand students.) And under the dominance of educational formalism, the teaching of English has played its part in the dispersal of the curriculum. The level of national literacy inherently depends on the level of cultural literacy—that is, on the linguistic and nonlinguistic information that is common to our citizens. But formalism has encouraged "English" to abandon its traditional role in helping to create a shared (though heterogeneous) national culture.

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Raising the level of literacy is not a matter of raising the level of purely linguistic skills. Literacy turns out to be less a system of skills than a system of information. The ability to read depends chiefly on knowledge and only secondarily on a mastery of the purely formal aspects of language. In an article in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR entitled "Cultural Literacy" (Spring 1983), I briefly described some of the experiments that have led researchers to this conclusion. I can sum up those results here in a couple of sentences. They prove that what chiefly counts in reading competence (and similar conclusions have been reached for writing competence) is the amount of relevant prior knowledge that readers have. The experiments showed that very few purely abstract skills can be transferred in reading or writing. Additional credence is lent to this result by its concord with more general research into the acquisition of intellectual skills.

Before discussing the practical implications of these historical and experimental observations, I shall sum up the general points I have made. I said that one central and abiding function of "English" as a school and college subject has been to help create and sustain our national culture. I implied that there is a compelling national need for us to continue in that tradition. I said that the acculturative function of "English" (in another country one could say "French" or "German" or "Russian") has unfortunately been undercut and evaded by the doctrine of educational formalism. I argued that educational formalism is inadequate even on its own technical ground, since concrete, shared information is essential both to reading skill and writing skill. The purely abstract elements of those skills are slender indeed. (One thinks, for example, of Strunk's eleven short maxims of composition.) Literacy is not an empty form or skill. It is content and knowledge. Literacy, I have suggested, is the modern equivalent of the tribal knowledge that young people had to acquire in preliterate cultures in order to gain adult membership in the tribe. In our modern society, in the sphere beyond a student's immediate family, the English teacher (no matter how underpaid) fills the role of our most important tribal elder. The gaining of literacy, and this includes the cultural knowledge that goes with it, is now our chief rite of passage.

I can easily understand why English teachers might hesitate to acknowledge such a responsibility for some of the important contents of our culture. And I can well understand the reluctance of parents and society generally to accord such an important function to English teachers. Moreover, the idea of a monolithic culture dictated by the schools runs against the American grain. Formalism has been one of our responses to our uneasiness about cultural uniformity. Yet to conceive of national acculturation as a simple, monolithic indoctrination is to mis-

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conceive it powerfully. Consider, for example, the question of monolithic indoctrination itself. Although some cultures in the world undoubtedly enforce harmonious unanimity, it is part of the American tradition to encourage independence, self-reliance, and diversity. Doesn't this pluralistic impulse run against the very idea of acculturation that I have been putting forward? Not really. The tradition of pluralism is a value and a tradition like any other. Americans do not learn it just by being born in a certain place. It is a national value that students and their parents have gotten from our history and literature, out of books, television, and movies, at home, at work, and at school. Traditionally, they have gotten a great deal of it at school, which is the one place where Americans assemble in common during their formative years.

Many English teachers still work vigorously in this authentic acculturative tradition. But in recent years English teachers at all levels have been encouraged to regard themselves as specialists in the teaching of neutral skills. I have already acknowledged the danger that lurks in the enterprise of culture making in American schools, particularly the danger of cultural imperialism by the dominant WASP tradition. But the answer to that is not to pretend that humanistic subjects in the schools and colleges are value free and culturally neutral. The answer is to recognize that if we face the danger of cultural imperialism, we should resist it not by a specious formalism, but by developing more heterogeneous values and traditions—a theme that has long been with us on the American scene. Sticking one's head in the sand in the face of this complex responsibility is not a useful solution to the problem. And although the problem is a general responsibility of our society as a whole, English teachers are an important part of that society and have a special duty to help develop and enhance our traditions according to their lights.

The most immediate application of these remarks is probably to the recent, unfortunate segregation of the three traditional aspects of "English": reading, writing, and literature. These three domains tend now to get separated at all levels of schooling. Even in the colleges, we are beginning to separate literature and composition courses, whereas just a few decades ago literature and composition were two parts of a single course generally called Freshman English. In recent years, these two sides of the profession have been fissioning off from each other in a way that is disastrous for the authentic cultural purposes of school and college English departments.

Experts in composition have persuaded themselves that they are pursuing a special intellectual discipline that has its own methods and its own advancing frontier of knowledge. The pedagogy of writing is widely regarded by specialists as a structural, empirical subject, allied

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with cognitive psychology. Indeed, its subject matter is an amalgam of elements from various fields: heuristics, logic, rhetoric, learning theory, brain research, and structural linguistics. The view that writing courses might contribute to a student's general information beyond the craft of writing is an alien concept. In the orientation of composition specialists, content tends to be relegated to the subject matter disciplines. Teachers in those content areas are simply invited to join forces with composition experts in a collaborative effort called "writing across the curriculum." Composition now has its own journals and its own professional organizations complete with conferences and annual meetings. (One sure way of getting enthusiastic applause at one of these composition conventions is to disparage literary mandarins in their ivory towers and to call them aesthetes who don't know where the real intellectual action is.)

The literary mandarins, for their part, have long operated under the unsupported thesis that literature is an autonomous intellectual subject with its own methods, subject matter, theories, and advancing frontier of knowledge. Needless to say, the concept behind this notion of autonomy is as eclectic and formalistic as the concept behind the field of composition. Literature is generally assumed to be different from other forms of written language, despite the failure of all attempts to define its essential character. Autonomous literary study has been predominantly formal and aesthetic, just as composition study has been formal and psychological. Statistics on one side, stylistics on the other: formalism has encouraged the separation of the two fields, and that is yet another of its insidious institutional attractions.

I should like to suggest that neither composition nor literature is an intellectual field in its own right. Literary study obviously connects with a number of genuine intellectual fields like history and philosophy. Composition, too, has disciplinary connections with linguistics and psychology. But neither literary study nor composition is an intellectual discipline. Both are primarily cultural subjects with cultural missions of unparalleled importance. To the extent that we evade those missions under the banner of some neutral formalism or disciplinary pretense, we are neglecting our primary educational responsibilities and are also making an empirical mistake.

This clearly implies that we should return to an integrated conception of "English" based on the pattern of the old literature-and-composition course originated by Blair and followed traditionally in the schools and colleges. Of course, such an integrated version of "English" has no purely intellectual center as a "field." (It has many different authentic intellectual centers.) Its unity lies in its acculturative mission, not its subject matter or methodology. At its humblest, English gives students the basic knowledge and skills that citizens need in a literate national

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culture. At its most exalted, it gives students public and private wisdom and encourages them to improve, and not just preserve, our best traditions. Both levels of our mission are acculturative in nature.

It follows that those who train English teachers should resist the trend to separate the specialties of composition and literature. Formalistic theories in both subjects have made such separation seem all too plausible, and historical circumstances have made it all too attractive. (Composition specialists are pleased with their current job opportunities and their newly found respectability. Literary specialists are pleased that somebody else is doing the chore of teaching composition.) But the authentic responsibilities of English teachers go in the other direction. The more we combine the domains of reading and writing, literature and literacy within our English courses, and the more we make sure that they are taught by people who are themselves literate, the more we will be fulfilling our mission to serve the national civility.

I ended my remarks to the heads of English departments with a plea for the reintegration of reading, writing, and literature (in the broadest sense of literature) in the teaching of "English." I urged that we teach valuable cultural materials in our composition classes as well as in our literature classes, and that we should ultimately abolish the rigid distinction between the two subjects. I saw no point in wasting time on inferior or peripheral contents in composition courses or any other part of our curriculum when there is so much catching up to be done. I also urged a reintegration of "English" into the wider culture. I observed that our enterprise is not only more cultural than it is scientific, but that it is in some ways a political enterprise. According to Plato, nothing is ultimately more important in politics than cultural politics, cultural decisions. That is a main theme of *The Republic*. I voiced the hope that English teachers would help lead a national debate about the central contents of our culture. I suggested that our central literary traditions should go beyond the received Anglo-American masterpieces and beyond what is admirable from a purely literary point of view to embrace what is admirable as part of our general cultural tradition.

English teachers are not the only group of people among whom educational formalism is widespread. It is the dominant and official theory among educationists and in schools of education. It has been widely accepted in the country at large. It has allowed us to avoid the hard choices and political conflicts that would precede any agreement about the essential contents of the humanistic curriculum. Although I have my own views about what those contents should be, I also know that when viewed from an anthropological perspective, many of our decisions are bound to be arbitrary. The important thing is to have a literate culture; next in importance is to have a good one; and after that,

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to have a good one with such and such traditions. The French require Racine; we do not. But we do require something. And we will not have a literate culture just by hoping that an invisible hand will determine the humanistic curriculum. From the start, national cultures have been self-conscious artifices. If we turn away from the seductions of educational formalism, we can look forward to an interesting national debate about what (heterogeneous) knowledge should now be the canonical knowledge of our tribe.

Truth and Beauty

ROBIN SEYFRIED

My husband's ex-wife calls my mother to say she is
beautiful she has always been
beautiful but it's so much harder
now she's dying she says
I wish her dead I'm mean but my mother says not
true I couldn't wish anyone dead and it's
true I couldn't
                but my husband's ex-wife
says we knew all along she was dying she's forgotten
screaming how her lover found her
irresistible she was so beautiful how my he was her
husband then didn't even try to win her back and now
she's dying she's been dying for years for love
of beauty and is dying now for my husband
to call her he promised she says in sickness
and in health until death
                but she goes on
dying she does it beautifully more truly
than ever before.

ROBIN SEYFRIED is managing editor of *Poetry Northwest*. Her poems have appeared in *Poetry* and the *Seattle Review*.

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Homage

ALAN SHAPIRO

Especially on those nights
when both of them keep fighting
and they fall asleep still mad,
he wakes hearing the pigeons
high up inside the chimney
fluttering down, settling.
Almost like lovers, the way
they rustle close together,
shift to give each other room;
cooing so briefly, faintly,
as though they each have wakened
only enough to know that
they are sleeping now, and warm.
And he draws up close to her,
his chest full against her back,
her hand in his. He's thinking
it would almost be a kind
of homage to their old love
to fall back asleep before
recalling that it's really
only anybody's warmth
now, which they receive and give.

ALAN SHAPIRO, who teaches English at Northwestern University, is the author of *The Courtesy*.

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Ethics Without Virtue

Moral Education in America

CHRISTINA HOFF SOMMERS

What do students in our nation's schools do all day? Most of them are clearly not spending their time reading the classics, learning math, or studying the physical sciences. It is likely that, along with photography workshops, keeping journals, and perhaps learning about computers, students spend part of their day in moral education classes. But these classes are not, as one might expect, designed to acquaint students with the Western moral tradition. Professional theorists in schools of education have found that tradition wanting and have devised an alternative, one they have marketed in public schools with notable success.

A reform of moral education is not a task to be undertaken lightly. The sincerity and personal integrity of the theorist-reformers is not at issue, but their qualifications as moral educators is a legitimate subject of concern. The leaders of reform do not worry about credentials. They are convinced that traditional middle-class morality is at best useless and at worst pernicious, and they have confidence in the new morality that is to replace the old and in the novel techniques to be applied to this end. In 1970 Theodore Sizer, then dean of the Harvard School of Education, co-edited with his wife Nancy a book entitled *Moral Education*. The preface set the tone by condemning the morality of "the Christian gentleman," "the American prairie," the McGuffey *Reader*, and the hypocrisy of teachers who tolerate a grading system that is "the terror of the young." According to the Sizers, all of the authors in the anthology agree that "the 'old morality' can and should be scrapped."

The movement to reform moral education has its seat in the most prestigious institutions of education. Its theories are seldom contested, and its practice is spreading. Students who have received the new moral instruction have been turning up in freshman college classes in increasing numbers. While giving college ethics courses during the past six years, I have become convinced that the need for a critical appraisal of the claims and assumptions of the movement is urgent. My experience is that the students who received the new teaching have been ill served by their mentors.

One gains some idea of the new moral educators from the terminology they use. Courses in ethics are called "values clarification" or "cognitive moral development"; teachers are "values processors," "values facilitators," or "reflective-active listeners"; lessons in moral reasoning are "sensitivity modules"; volunteer work in the community is an "action module"; and teachers "dialogue" with students to help them discover their own systems of values. In these dialogues the teacher avoids discussing "old bags of virtues," such as wisdom, courage, compassion, and "proper" behavior, because any attempt to instill these would be to indoctrinate the student. Some leaders of the new reform movement advise teachers that effective moral education cannot take place in the "authoritarian" atmosphere of the average American high school. The teacher ought to democratize the classroom, turning it into a "just community" where the student and teacher have an equal say. Furthermore, the student who takes a norma-

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tive ethics course in college will likely encounter a professor who also has a principled aversion to the inculcation of moral precepts and who will confine classroom discussion to such issues of social concern as the Karen Ann Quinlan case, recombinant DNA research, or the moral responsibilities of corporations. The result is a system of moral education that is silent about virtue.

The teaching of virtue is not viewed as a legitimate aim of a moral curriculum, but there is no dearth of alternative approaches. From the time the values education movement began in the late nineteen sixties, its theorists have produced an enormous number of articles, books, films, manuals, and doctoral dissertations; there are now journals, advanced degree programs, and entire institutes dedicated exclusively to moral pedagogy; and for the past several years, teachers, counselors, and education specialists have been attending conferences, seminars, workshops, and retreats to improve their skills in values-processing. At present, two opposing ideologies dominate moral education: the values clarification movement, whose best-known proponent is Sidney Simon of the University of Massachusetts School of Education; and the cognitive moral development movement, whose chief spokesman is Lawrence Kohlberg, a professor of psychology and education, and director of the Center for Moral Education at Harvard.

Values clarification, according to Sidney Simon, is "based on the premise that none of us has the 'right' set of values to pass on to other people's children." Its methods are meant to help students to get at "their own feelings, their own ideas, their own beliefs, so that the choices and decisions they make are conscious and deliberate, based on their own value system." The success of the values clarification movement has been phenomenal. In 1975 a study from the Hoover Institute referred to "hundreds perhaps thousands of school programs that employ the clarification methodology" and reported that ten states have officially adopted values clarification as a model for their moral education programs. Proponents of values clarification consider it inappropriate for a teacher to encourage students, however subtly or indirectly, to adopt the values of the teacher or the community. In their book, *Readings in Values Clarification*, Simon and his colleague Howard Kirschenbaum write:

> We call this approach "moralizing," although it has also been known as inculcation, imposition, indoctrination, and in its most extreme form brainwashing. Moralizing is the direct or indirect transfer of a set of values from one person or group to another person or group.

The student of values clarification is taught awareness of his preferences and his right to their satisfaction in a democratic society. To help students discover what it is that they genuinely value, they are asked to respond to questionnaires called "strategies." Some typical questions are: Which animal would you rather be: an ant, a beaver, or a donkey? Which season do you like best? Do you prefer hiking, swimming, or watching television? In one strategy called "Values Geography," the student is helped to discover his geographical preferences; other lessons solicit his reaction to seat belts, messy handwriting, hiking, wall-to-wall carpeting, cheating, abortion, hit-and-run drivers, and a mother who severely beats a two-year-old child.

Western literature and history are two traditional alienating influences that the values clarification movement is on guard against. Simon has written that he has ceased to find meaning "in the history of war or the structure of a sonnet, and more meaning in the search to find value in life." He and his colleagues believe that exposure to one's cultural heritage is not likely to be morally beneficial to the "average student."

> Because values are complex and because man's thoughts and accomplishments are both abundant and complicated, it is difficult to recommend that the average student rely on this approach. It takes substantial mental stamina and ability and much time and energy to travel this road. While the study of our cultural heritage can be defended on other grounds, we would not expect it to be sufficient for value education.

The values clarification theorist does not believe that moral sensibility and social conscience are, in significant measure, learned by reading and discussing the classics. Instead Simon speaks of the precious legacy we can leave to "generations of young people if we teach them to set their priorities and rank

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order the marvelous items in life's cafeteria."

As a college teacher coping with the motley ideologies of high school graduates, I find this alarming. Young people today, many of whom are in a complete moral stupor, need to be shown that there is an important distinction between moral and nonmoral decisions. Values clarification blurs the distinction. Children are queried about their views on homemade Christmas gifts, people who wear wigs, and whether or not they approve of abortion or would turn in a hit-and-run driver as if no significant differences existed among these issues.

It is not surprising that teachers trained in neutrality and the principled avoidance of "moralizing" sometimes find themselves in bizarre classroom situations. In a junior high school in Newton, Massachusetts, a teacher put on the blackboard a poster of a Hell's Angel wearing a swastika. The students were asked to react. "He's honest, anyway. He's living out his own feelings," answered one. "He's not fooling," said another. When the students seemed to react favorably to the Hell's Angel, the teacher ventured to suggest that "an alienated person might not be happy."

The following conversation took place between a values clarification teacher and her students:

STUDENT: Does this mean that we can decide for ourselves whether to be honest on tests here?

TEACHER: No, that means that you can decide on the value. I personally value honesty; and although you may choose to be dishonest, I shall insist that we be honest in our tests. In other areas of your life, you may have more freedom to be dishonest.

AND ANOTHER TEACHER: My class deals with morality and right and wrong quite a bit. I don't expect them all to agree with me; each has to satisfy himself according to his own conviction, as long as he is sincere, and thinks he is pursuing what is right. I often discuss cheating this way, but I always get defeated because they will argue that cheating is all right. After you accept the idea that kids have the right to build a position with logical arguments, you have to accept what they come up with.

The student has values; the values clarification teacher is merely "facilitating" the student's access to them. Thus, no values are taught. The emphasis is on *learning how*, not on *learning that*. The student does not learn *that* acts of stealing are wrong; he learns how to respond to such acts.

The values clarification course is, in this sense, contentless. As if to make up for this, it is methodologically rich. It is to be expected that an advocate of values clarification emphasizes method over content in other areas of education, and indeed he does. Many handbooks, strategies, board games, and kits have been developed to help teachers adapt the methods of values clarification to such subjects as English, history, science, math, and even home economics and Spanish. Values clarification guides for girl scout troops and Sunday school classes are also available, as well as manuals to assist parents in clarifying values at the dinner table.

Simon and his colleagues explain that it is useless and anachronistic to teach the student at a "facts level." In a history lesson on the Constitution, for example, the teacher is advised not to waste too much time on such questions as where and when the Constitution was drawn up. Undue attention should also not be given to the "concepts level," where, for example, the teacher discusses the moral origins of the Bill of Rights. When the learning of subject matter is unavoidable, Simon and his colleagues recommend that it be lifted to a higher and more urgent level where students are asked "you-centered" questions, such as, "What rights do you have in your family?" Or, "Many student governments are really token governments controlled by the 'mother country,' i.e., the administration. Is this true in your school? What can you do about it?" And, "When was the last time you signed a petition?"

The classical moral tradition will not be revived by the practitioners of values clarification. Indeed, it is, in their eyes, an alien tradition that is insensitive to the needs and rights of the contemporary student.

II

Lawrence Kohlberg, the leader of the second major movement in moral education, shares with values clarification educators a low opinion of traditional morality. In his

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contribution to Theodore and Nancy Sizer's anthology, *Moral Education,* he writes, "Far from knowing whether it can be taught, I have no idea what virtue really is." Kohlberg's disclaimer is not a Socratic confession of ignorance; he considers the teaching of traditional virtues to be at best a waste of time and at worst coercive. Like Sidney Simon, he, too, uses the language of conspiracy to characterize the American educational system. He refers often to the "hidden curriculum" and insists that the teacher must not be "an agent of the state, the church, or the social system, [but] rather . . . a free moral agent dealing with children who are free moral agents." Kohlberg cites as an example of covert indoctrination a teacher who yelled at some boys for not returning their books to the proper place. "The teacher would have been surprised to know that her concerns with classroom management defined for her children what she and her school thought were basic values, or that she was engaged in indoctrination." Kohlberg and his disciples are currently busy transforming some of the best school systems in the country into "just communities" where no such indoctrination takes place.

Kohlberg's authority derives from his cognitive developmental approach to moral education. Following John Dewey, Kohlberg distinguishes three main stages of moral development (each of which is partitioned into a higher and lower stage, making six in all). The first stage is called the premoral or preconventional reward/punishment level. In the second stage morals are conventional but unreflective. In the third stage moral principles are autonomously chosen on rational grounds. Kohlberg's research applies Piaget's idea that the child possesses certain cognitive structures that come successively into play as the child develops. According to Kohlberg, the latent structures are a cross-cultural fact of cognitive psychology. Kohlberg's more specific thesis on the unfolding of the child's innate moral propensities has received a great deal of deserved attention. The literature on Kohlberg is controversial, and it is far too early to say whether his ideas are sound enough for eventual use in the classroom. Kohlberg himself has urged and already put into practice pedagogical applications of his ideas.

From the assumption of innateness, it is but a short step to the belief that the appropriate external circumstances will promote the full moral development of the child. It then becomes the job of the educator to provide those circumstances "facilitating" the child to his moral maturity. The innate structures are essentially contentless, and Kohlberg and his followers do not think it is the job of the moral educator to develop a virtuous person by supplying the content—that is, the traditional virtues. To do that would be, in Kohlberg's contemptuous phrase, to impose on the child an "old bag of virtues." Kohlberg and his associate Moshe Blatt remark in the *Journal of Moral Education*:

> Moral education is best conceived as a natural process of dialogue among peers, rather than as a process of didactic instruction or preaching. The teacher and the curriculum are best conceived as facilitators of this dialogue.

If moral education is to be a dialogue among peers, the relation between teacher and student must be radically transformed. Fully prepared to accept these consequences, Kohlberg, in 1974, founded the Cluster School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It consisted of thirty students, six teachers, dozens of consultants, and Kohlberg—all of whom had an equal voice in running the school. According to Kohlberg, "The only way school can help graduating students become persons who can make society a just community is to let them try experimentally to make the school themselves." As he soon learned, these student-citizens were forever stealing from one another and using drugs during school hours. These transgressions provoked a long series of democratically conducted "town meetings" that to an outsider look very much like EST encounter groups. The students were frequently taken on retreats (Kohlberg and his associates share with the values clarification people a penchant for retreats), where many of them broke the rules against sex and drugs. This provoked more democratic confrontations where, Kohlberg was proud to report, it was usually decided that for the sake of the group the students would police one another on subsequent retreats and turn in the names of the transgressors. Commenting on the rash of thefts at the Cluster School, Kohlberg said,

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"At the moment there is clearly a norm in the Cluster School of maintaining trust around property issues. But there is uncertainty about whether the norm has [fully] developed." Since the Cluster School lasted only five years, this uncertainty will never be resolved.

In turning to the just communities, Kohlberg has consciously abandoned his earlier goal of developing individual students to the highest stages of moral development. The most he now hopes for is development to stage four, where students learn to respect the new just social order. His reasons are revealing. In 1980 in an anthology edited by Ralph Mosher, *Moral Education: A First Generation of Research and Development*, Kohlberg writes, "Perhaps all stage six persons of the 1960's had been wiped out, perhaps they had regressed, or maybe it was all my imagination in the first place."

The Cluster School has been the subject of a great many articles and doctoral theses. Careers have been advanced just by praising it. In Mosher's anthology one critic writes about the school:

> Cluster School . . . in my judgment, is a unique secondary school environment, characterized by a respect and caring for persons and a determination to make the governance structure one in which students can experience the roles necessary for full participation in democracy.

From these remarks—and similar ones by others who visited Cluster School—you would never guess that the school was in shambles and just about to close. The school was racially divided; drugs, sex, and theft were rampant; and Kohlberg was fighting bitterly with the teachers. Here was a school —with thirty students and six exceptionally trained and dedicated teachers—that by any objective standard must be counted a failure. Yet in American professional education nothing succeeds like failure. Having scored their failure at the Cluster School, the Kohlbergians have put their ideas to work in more established schools. (For example, they now exercise a significant influence in such diverse public school systems as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Salt Lake City, Utah; Scarsdale, New York; and Brookline, Massachusetts.)

Brookline High School in Massachusetts provides a particularly sad example of the way the new ideologies can penetrate a fine high school. The school administration has been taken over by Kohlbergians who, with the help of federal funds, are trying to turn it into a "just community." To this end the governance of the school has been given over to the entire school community—students, teachers, administrators, secretaries, and janitorial staff. To make the process work smoothly, not all students are invited to the weekly "town meetings," just their representatives. But, because many of the two thousand or so students are indifferent, many student representatives are self-appointed. And a big problem is that most of the teachers do not attend (nor, of course, do tired secretaries and maintenance workers).

I attended one meeting with thirty students, five teachers, two student visitors from Scarsdale who are working with Kohlberg and studying the Brookline program in hopes of using it in New York, and two observers from the Carnegie-Mellon Foundation, who were there to investigate the possibility of making a film about the Brookline experiment for public television. The kids who participated in the meeting were charming and articulate, and the Carnegie-Mellon people were clearly pleased, and they will make their film. Like many educational experts who admire the Brookline town meetings, these observers are probably unaware that many of the teachers feel harassed and manipulated by the Kohlberg administration. So far, the participants in the town meetings—who are mostly teenagers exercising more power than they will ever be granted in college or graduate school—have voted to rescind a rule against Walkman radios on campus, to prohibit homework assignments for vacation periods, to disallow surprise quizzes, and they have instituted a procedure for bringing teachers who give tests or assignments that are too demanding before a "Fairness Committee." One teacher told me that the students had never asked for the powers they now enjoy. According to the teacher, the school authorities handed these powers over to students "for their own good." Just communities are Kohlberg's answer to the oppression exercised by established authority. Evidently, Kohlberg sees no need to question his assumption that established authority is intrinsically suspect. In any event, it

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is ironic that now, when teachers with authority are so rare, educational theorists like Kohlberg are proposing that authority itself is the evil to be combated.

Ralph Mosher, a Harvard-trained Kohlbergian, is the chief educational consultant to the Brookline High School. In his anthology he writes the following about the standards that had been in place:

> Moral education, all the more powerful because it is "hidden," is embedded in the tacit values of the curriculum and the school. For example, the most worthy/valued student in Brookline High School is the one who achieves early admission to Harvard on a full scholarship. How few can accomplish this is *obvious*. Yet teachers, counselors, and parents put great, albeit subtle, pressure on the many to do likewise. . . . What the research [in moral education] has attempted to do is to make some schooling more just.

Mosher's attitude is instructive. Ideals, it seems, are not goals to aim for. They must be attainable by the majority of students. If any goals are set up, they must be ones to which most students can realistically aspire. For Mosher, vigilance against superimposing a hidden agenda with elitist bias is the order of the day.

Kohlberg's ideas have taken hold in the better schools, where one can still find a fair number of parents who can afford to hold attitudes against elitism. Should the public schools of Brookline, Cambridge, or Scarsdale fail to provide the education necessary for admission to the best colleges, those parents have recourse to some fine private schools in the neighborhood. In the meantime they can indulge the unexceptionable concept of a just community, whose egalitarian character is welcomed by those who find themselves uncomfortably well-fixed, particularly after the radical views they held in the halcyon sixties.

The values clarification and cognitive development reformers are well aware that they are riding a wave of public concern about the need for an effective system of moral education. Thus Mosher writes:

> [A] high proportion of Americans (four of five in recent Gallup Polls) support moral education in the public schools. What the respondents mean by moral education is, of course, moot. Probably the teaching of virtues such as honesty, respect for adults, moderation in the use of alcohol/drugs, sexual restraint and so on. . . . Educators would have to exceed Caesar's wife not to capitalize on an idea whose time appeared to have come.

This last remark about capitalizing on the parent's desire for higher moral standards is disarmingly cynical. Naturally the public wants its "old bag of virtues," but educational theorists such as Mosher are convinced that giving the public what it wants is ineffective and unjust. The traditional moralists have failed (witness Watergate), so now it's their turn. Mosher's attitude to the benighted parents is condescending. No doubt for Mosher and Kohlberg, the morally confident leaders of the reform movement, theirs is the right kind of elitism.

The deprecation of moralizing common to values clarification and cognitive development theory has been effective even in those schools where the reforms have not yet penetrated. Increasingly nowadays, few teachers have the temerity to praise any middle-class virtues. The exception is the virtue of tolerance. But, when tolerance is the sole virtue, students' capacity for moral indignation, so important for moral development, is severely inhibited. The result is moral passivity and confusion and a shift of moral focus from the individual to society.

III

The student entering college today shows the effects of an educational system that has kept its distance from the traditional virtues. Unencumbered by the "old bag of virtues," the student arrives toting a ragbag of another stripe whose contents may be roughly itemized as follows: psychological egoism (the belief that the primary motive for action is selfishness), moral relativism (the doctrine that what is praiseworthy or contemptible is a matter of cultural conditioning), and radical tolerance (the doctrine that to be culturally and socially aware is to understand and excuse the putative wrongdoer). Another item in the bag is the conviction that the seat of moral responsibility is found in society and its institutions, not in individuals.

The half-baked relativism of the college student tends to undermine his common sense. In a term paper that is far from atypical,

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one of my students wrote that Jonathan Swift's "modest proposal" for solving the problem of hunger in Ireland by harvesting Irish babies for food was "good for Swift's society, but not for ours." All too often one comes up against a grotesquely distorted perspective that common sense has little power to set right. In one discussion in my introductory philosophy class, several students were convinced that the death of one person and the death of ten thousand is equally bad. When a sophomore was asked whether she saw Nagasaki as the moral equivalent of a traffic accident, she replied, "From a moral point of view, yes." Teachers of moral philosophy who are not themselves moral agnostics trade such stories for dark amusement. But it appears that teachers in other disciplines are also struck by the moral perversity of their students. Richard M. Hunt, a professor of government at Harvard University, gave a course on the Holocaust to one hundred Harvard undergraduates. In the course he was disturbed to find that a majority of students adopted the view that the rise of Hitler and the Nazis was inevitable, that no one could have resisted it, and that in the end no one was responsible for what happened. Hunt's teaching assistant remarked to him, "You know, I think if some of our students were sitting as judges at the Nuremberg trials, they would probably acquit—or at least pardon—most of the Nazi defendants." Professor Hunt has dubbed his students' forgiving attitude toward the past "no-fault history."

It is fair to say that many college students are thoroughly confused about morality. What they sorely need are some straightforward courses in moral philosophy and a sound and unabashed introduction to the Western moral tradition—something they may never have had before. But few teachers will use that tradition as a source of moral instruction: the fear of indoctrination is even stronger in the colleges than it is at primary and secondary schools. In a recent study of the teaching of ethics prepared by the Hastings Center, a well-respected institute for the study of ethical questions, the authors write:

> A major concern about the teaching of ethics has been whether and to what extent it is appropriate to teach courses on ethics in a pluralistic society, and whether it is possible to teach such courses without engaging in unacceptable indoctrination.

And elsewhere in the same report:

> No teacher of ethics can assume that he or she has a solid grasp on the nature of morality as to pretend to know what finally counts as good moral conduct. No society can assume that it has any better grasp of what so counts as to empower teachers to propagate it in colleges and universities. Perhaps most importantly, the premise of higher education is that students are at an age where they have to begin coming to their own conclusions and shaping their own view of the world.

It would, however, be altogether incorrect to say that the colleges are ignoring moral instruction. The spread of moral agnosticism has been accompanied by an extraordinary increase in courses of applied ethics. Philosophy departments, isolated and marginal for many years, are now attracting unprecedented numbers of students to their courses in medical ethics, business ethics, ethics for everyday life, ethics for engineers, nurses, social workers, and lawyers. Today there are dozens of journals and conferences, hundreds of books and articles, and—according to the Hastings Center—eleven thousand college courses in applied ethics.

The new interest in applied ethics is itself a phenomenon to be welcomed. Public discussions of controversial issues will surely benefit from the contributions of philosophers, and the literature of applied ethics should be read by anyone who seeks a responsible understanding of topical issues. In reading the anthologies of applied ethics, a student encounters arguments of philosophers who take strong stands on important social questions. These arguments often shake a student's confidence in moral relativism. Nevertheless, the literature of applied ethics, like the literature of values clarification and cognitive moral development, has little or nothing to say about matters of individual virtue. The resurgence of moral education in the college thus reinforces the shift away from personal morals to an almost exclusive preoccupation with the morality of institutional policies. After all, most students are not likely to be involved personally in administering the death penalty or selecting candidates for kidney dialysis; and, since most will never do recombinant DNA research, or even have abortions, the purpose of the courses in applied ethics is to teach students how to form responsible opin-

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ions on questions of social policy. A strong ethical curriculum is a good thing, but a curriculum of ethics without virtue is a cause for concern.

The applied ethics movement in the universities started in the late nineteen sixties when philosophers became interested once again in normative ethics. Between 1940 and 1968 ethics had been theoretical and methodologically self-conscious, to the relative neglect of practical ethics. A large number of philosophers emerged from the sixties eager to contribute to national moral debates. But like Simon, Kohlberg, and their followers, these philosophers were suspicious and distrustful of moralizing and deeply averse to indoctrination. It is no small feat to launch a powerful and influential movement in normative ethics without recourse to the language of vice and virtue and a strong notion of personal responsibility, but that is exactly what is being attempted. The new university moralists, uncomfortable and ideologically at odds with the discredited middle-class ethic, are making their reform movement succeed by addressing themselves, not to the vices and virtues of individuals, but to the moral character of our nation's institutions. Take a look at almost any text used today in college ethics courses—for example, *Ethics for Modern Life*, edited by R. Abelson and M. Friquegnon, *Today's Moral Problems*, edited by R. Wasserstrom, or *Moral Problems* by J. Rachels—and you will find that almost all of the articles consist of philosophical evaluations of the conduct and policies of schools, hospitals, courts, corporations, and the United States government.

Inevitably the student forms the idea that applying ethics to modern life is mainly a question of learning how to be for or against social and institutional policies. Appropriately enough, many of the articles sound like briefs written for a judge or legislator. In that sort of ethical climate, a student soon loses sight of himself as a moral agent and begins to see himself as a moral spectator or a protojurist. This is not to deny that many of the issues have an immediate personal dimension. They do, but the primary emphasis is not on what one is to do as a person but on what one is to believe as a member of society—in other words, on ideology and doctrine rather than on personal responsibility and practical decency.

The move to issue-oriented courses is hailed as a move back to the days when moral instruction played a significant role in education. Nothing could be further from the truth. Where Aristotle, Aquinas, Mill, and Kant are telling us how to behave, the contemporary university moralist is concerned with what we are to advocate, vote for, protest against, and endorse. Michael Walzer has compared the applied ethics movement to the scholarly activities of the Greek Academicians, the Talmudists, and the medieval Casuists. The comparison is inept, for those earlier moralists were working in a tradition in which it was assumed that the practical end of all moral theory was the virtuous individual. The ancient sophist, with his expertise in rhetoric and politics, is a more convincing analogue to the teachers of issue-oriented ethics, who find little time for the history of ethical theory with its traditional emphasis on the good and virtuous life. One may therefore be wary of the widespread enthusiasm for the "exciting new developments" in the teaching of ethics. Especially misleading is the frequent observation that the revival of interest in practical ethics is a great advance over the earlier preoccupation with evaluative language (meta-ethics). Admittedly the preoccupation with meta-ethics that characterized the teaching of ethics a decade ago left the student undernourished by neglecting normative ethics. But, in all fairness, neither students nor teachers were under any illusion that meta-ethics was the whole of ethics. Today the student is learning that normative ethics is primarily social policy. This being so, moral action should be politically directed; the individual's task is to bring the right civic institutions (the true moral agents) into place. The student tacitly assumes that ethics is not a daily affair, that it is a matter for specialists, and that its practical benefits are deferred until the time of institutional reform.

The result of identifying normative ethics with public policy is justification for and reinforcement of moral passivity in the student. Even problems that call for large-scale political solutions have their immediate private dimension, but a student trained in a practical ethics that has avoided or de-emphasized individual responsibility is simply unprepared for any demand that is not politically or ideologically formulated. The student is placed in

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the undemanding role of the indignant moral spectator who needs not face the comparatively minor corruptions in his own life.

How, finally, is one to account for the ethics-without-virtue phenomenon? A fully adequate answer is beyond me, but clearly there is a great deal more to the story than the national disenchantment with a system of education that "failed to prevent" moral lapses such as Watergate. A historian of ideas would probably take us back to romantics like Rousseau and to realists like Marx. George Steiner has written of this theme in Rousseau:

> In the Rousseauist mythology of conduct, a man could commit a crime either because his education had not taught him how to distinguish good and evil, or because he had been corrupted by society. Responsibility lay with his school or environment for evil cannot be native to the soul. And because the individual is not wholly responsible he cannot be wholly damned.

The values clarification theorists can find little to disagree with in this description.

For social-minded reformers, justice is the principal virtue, and social policy is where ethics is really "at." The assumption is that there is an implicit conflict between the just society and the repressive morality of its undemocratic predecessors. An extreme version of this theme is presented in a little book edited by Trotsky, *Their Morals and Ours,* with it searing attack on the "conservative banalities of bourgeois morality." For Trotsky, of course, social reform requires revolution, but his indictment of the hypocrisies and "brutalities" of "their morals" must sound familiar to the Kohlbergians. The fate of those societies that have actually succeeded in replacing personal morality with social policy is the going price for ignoring the admonition of Max Weber: "He who seeks salvation of the soul—of his own and others—should not seek it along the avenue of politics."

An essay on contemporary trends in moral education would be incomplete without mention of the Moral Majority. I have refrained from discussing this movement partly because it receives a great deal of public attention compared to the relative neglect of the movements inspired by the New England professors of education. But I suspect another reason for my silence is my own dismay that at this moment the Moral Majority constitutes the only vocal and self-confident alternative to the ethics-without-virtue movement.

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IN MEMORIAM

Douglas Bush Remembered

EDWARD LE COMTE

John Nash Douglas Bush, Gurney Professor of English Literature Emeritus at Harvard University, died of pneumonia March 2, 1983. He was nineteen days short of his eighty-seventh birthday. My sorrow at the ending of our long association, perhaps it would not be presumptuous to call it a friendship (it was not an intimacy), is tempered by the reflection that he not only lived long but retained his faculties to the end. It was almost comic when, during our telephone conversations, Douglas would complain of his waning powers, while simultaneously giving witty proof in his immaculately typed letters and his continuing publications that just the opposite was the case. I, twenty years younger, kept telling him that his memory was better than mine. His son Geoffrey said that, for as far back as he could remember, his father complained of waning powers—and of course it was never so.

The obituary of Douglas Bush in the *New York Times* was a disgrace for a newspaper of record. It was four days late, it lacked a photo, it was parsimonious, it spent half its small space on inept quotation instead of facts, and it was inaccurate. That paper, whose editors apparently do not look at the *Boston Globe*, caught up with the news only after a memorial service was held at the Appleton Memorial Chapel in Harvard Yard. *Time* magazine did him more justice when, in its issue of March 28, it ran an essay on great teachers by Roger Rosenblatt, a former student and colleague.

Bush started life as a Canadian, born in Morrisburg, Ontario, March 21, 1896. At the University of Toronto, where he received his bachelor's degree in 1920 and his master's degree in 1921, he majored in classics, as a Renaissance scholar should (though scarcely any do nowadays). After receiving his Ph.D. from Harvard only two years afterward, he went to England in 1923/24 on a Sheldon traveling fellowship, then he taught at Harvard for three years before transferring to the University of Minnesota, whose press brought out his first book. On September 3, 1927, he married Hazel Cleaver, who survives him at ninety-one. He was at the University of Minnesota from 1927 to 1936, rising rapidly through the ranks to full professor. One of his students there was the biographer Marchette Chute. Harvard called Bush back in 1936; he succeeded to the Gurney chair in 1957 and retired in 1966. At his retirement there was not the usual festschrift but rather a presentation to him of a collection of his essays entitled *Engaged and Disengaged.* I recall that the daily *New York Times* did a review of that (at least), with photo. Collecting this volume of essays instead of compiling a festschrift guaranteed that the book would be well written.

Before going into corroborative detail, let me state, flat out, that Douglas Bush was recognized as the world's outstanding authority on Renaissance English literature and on Milton. In addition, he roamed the centuries in his teaching and in his publications, from Chaucer to Lionel Trilling. He had an especial affection for the nineteenth century. With his capacious memory, he could teach the Victorian novel, for example, at a moment's notice. Among his score of books were magisterial studies of Keats, Jane Austen, and Matthew Arnold (utterly disparate figures, of course); he edited, and planned a book on, Tennyson, but it was never completed. By comparison, other eminent scholars seem confined and their production small.

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I was middle-aged before I met Bush at a Milton Society dinner. My three degrees are from Columbia, where I taught for half my career. But my contact with Bush's mind came early. I dedicated a 1978 book to Bush as one "whose lectures I was never so fortunate as to hear, but who has taught me in all other ways, beginning forty years ago." When I was a junior at Columbia College, I bought Bush's first book and soon after bought his newly published second. In a way, this kind of beginning has advantages over the cult of personality—especially as Bush in person made no effort to be imposing—which has students gawking at a "name" professor, none of whose publications they have read or intend to read. They just sit in the classroom and expect to be entertained, they witen not how.

As a writer Bush was as entertaining as he was learned, a rare phenomenon among professors. His humor and wit lighten the heavy task he set for himself in those first two books, *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry* (1932) and *Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry* (1937). Imagine, as just the preliminary requirement, going through the complete works of hundreds of English and, finally, American poets (including, as acknowledged, "some very small beer"), with all the accumulated commentary, and being armed with knowledge, in the original languages, of the poets' sources. Then there was the necessity (for Bush had high standards) of saying something in each individual case that is both fresh and judicious. It adds up to 1,007 pages, not counting the prefaces.

The prefaces should, however, be counted, for Bush's unmistakable voice was there from the very beginning of his huge undertaking. The opening words were:

> This study set out, with Elizabethan confidence, to describe the uses of mythology in English nondramatic poetry from the Middle Ages to the present. The result of such an ambition can perhaps be suggested in the apt words of a university poet concerning Actaeon: "His hands were changed to feet, and he in short / Became a stag." In plain prose, this volume ends at 1680; I hope in another volume to complete the tale.

The beginning of the second paragraph of the introduction can serve as an illustration of the author's characteristic sense of paradox and balance, the skill at making a point, even an epigram, without skewing—or skewering—the truth:

> Poetry is largely a matter of symbol, and the complete rebel, like Blake, who flouts tradition and insists on making his own symbols, may achieve originality of a kind, but at a high price, as the most ardent devotee of the prophetic books must admit. The greatest artists, I think Mr. Clive Bell has remarked, always look forward. It is equally true that they always look backward. Of course feeble poets who try to write in a great tradition remain feeble poets, and the bright world of classic myth has allured a number of persons who, in the words of Coleridge, mistake an intense desire to possess the reputation of poetic genius for the actual powers.

There are gems on every page. I soon had occasion to quote the throwaway line about the Elizabethans: "They display a medieval readiness to tell all they know up to the date of publication." One remark, as revised in the Alexander Lectures at the University of Toronto, which were published as *The Renaissance and English Humanism* (1939), reacted to Jesus' scorn for Greek literature in *Paradise Regained*: "It is painful indeed to watch Milton turn and rend some main roots of his being." Those vivid words became a subject, or object, of controversy and elicited many an article.

My teacher at Columbia, Gilbert Highet, in his own monumental book *The Classical Tradition*, called the *Renaissance Tradition* volume "an indispensable work, written with fine taste and extensive knowledge." He added of the sequel: "This book is quite as gracefully written as its predecessor, but labours a little under the effort of covering *all* the poets who fall within the period and the pattern. Still, it is nearly always a pleasure and a profit to read."

Bush's mythology books gave sustenance to my particular interests as a student, which were Keats, and Milton, and myth. I was an old-school boy in that I went to Trinity (founded in 1709) in New York, where I had four years of Latin, three of Greek, and three of French. In college I continued those languages and added German and Italian. I was uncertain whether to specialize in the nineteenth century or the seventeenth, but I knew I wanted to get out of the twentieth. As a

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junior I did a term paper on Keats's *Endymion* for the formidable Emery Neff, who treated undergraduates as graduates. He gave me an unheard of "A plus." If I had received just a plain "A," my academic career might have been different. The result was that I did my master's degree essay on a passage in *Comus*, but returned to Keats as the principal reason for my doctoral dissertation, published in 1944 as *Endymion in England: The Literary History of a Greek Myth*. My second sentence referred—I might better say, deferred—to Bush. Originally it was the first sentence, but an adviser said that was de trop. The master gave it his blessing in a review in the *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* in 1945.

In the same year Bush published his fourth and fifth books, one short, one long, both major (Would he ever do a minor book? we asked). *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600–1660* has never had a rival. It is a mine of sometimes very recondite information and a miracle of evenhanded, well-proportioned treatment of major and minor figures and their historical and cultural milieu—everything expected of a textbook and a reference work with the addition of immense readability. The author confined his individualism to style, unlike C. S. Lewis (I am not denying his genius) whose eccentric volume for the sixteenth century in the same Oxford History of English Literature series gives Gavin Douglas four times more space than Donne. Bush's first thirty-eight pages, "The Background of the Age," show his power of synthesizing. In 1962 he made elaborate changes for a second edition, just as, the next year, he revised *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition*. Modest, he never felt he had said the last word. I had a startling instance of this when he wrote a foreword for a 1973 book of mine. He said if I was not satisfied with his comment, he would revise it. Another time, I remarked that I was pleased I had as many as forty-five students in my Milton course at Albany. Since I was sometimes lucky to have a dozen, I was not being boastful but exuberant. Then I asked him (he had retired) how many he had been accustomed to. He did not want to tell me, but finally said "about 250"—which was probably an understatement. An instance of his irony is buried in his 1962 bibliography on Donne, where he observed of a promise still not kept that a scholar's "long-awaited edition of the letters will be valuable for those who live to see it."

One thing could stir this scholar-critic from his even temper: an attack on Milton. "The Modern Reaction Against Milton" was the title of the first of four Messenger Lectures delivered at Cornell University, which comprise that other 1945 book, *"Paradise Lost" in Our Time: Some Comments*. (This went out of print so fast that I, then in California, suffered the cultural lag of having to beg the press for a last, damaged copy.) Bush quoted F. R. Leavis's "smug words":

> Milton's dislodgment, in the past decade, after his two centuries of predominance, was effected with remarkably little fuss. The irresistible argument was, of course, Mr. Eliot's creative achievement; it gave his few critical asides—potent, it is true, by context—their finality, and made it unnecessary to elaborate a case.

It takes an effort to remember now what authority T. S. Eliot once wielded as a critic. His critical asides caused tremors, if not earthquakes, that reverberated around the literary world. Bush took him on undaunted, even as he later made short shrift, in a review essay, of my great teacher and colleague Mark Van Doren for displaying imperfect sympathies in regard to the same epic. Ironically, Eliot was to leave Leavis high and dry (he was always dry) by recanting, at least partially, in 1947. Past the polemics, *"Paradise Lost" in Our Time* revived, not the faded "new humanism" of Irving Babbitt, but Christian humanism—so old that it seemed new.

At last a minor work appeared, *The Portable Milton* (1949), which, nevertheless, sold well in hard and soft cover. The editor was not allowed any annotations, only a glossary. This was one Harvard professor, unlike so many in the ivy—or ivory—tower, who was not a snob about reaching a wider audience. To convey a cultural message, I verily believe he would have written for the *Saturday Evening Post*. He was receptive to two popular efforts of mine in seventeenth-century biography, reviewing the one in the *New York Times* and supplying a blurb for the other that spoke (too sanguinely) of "all the ingredients of a best seller." On the other hand, he despised sexual, not to say Freudian, emphasis, and when I did a scholarly book, *Milton and Sex* (the

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blunt title was not the one I wanted), I kept it from him. The Columbia University Press made a mistake in sending him my 1981 *Dictionary of Puns in Milton's English Poetry*, which, containing some wild conjectures, strained his good will, but he did his best to give the press something it could quote: "In its special way it is informative, stimulating, and provocative, thanks to the author's acute reading. As he says, one doesn't need to agree with all his findings." His personal letter to me was warmer, but, of course, also honest about his doubts. In a 1978 essay for *Daedalus*, he used, to my surprise, a pun I had thrown his way to complain about literary interpretations that "are mainly or wholly 'phallacious.' "

In the 1950s, "as plates dropped from his pocket," Bush's bounty continued: *Science and English Poetry* (1950); *Classical Influences in Renaissance Literature* (1952); *English Poetry: The Main Currents from Chaucer to the Present* (1952); editions of Tennyson and Keats and Shakespeare's sonnets (the last with his colleague Alfred Harbage). All the while, starting in the 1920s, he was doing articles and essays and notes and reviews that would have been sufficient to give a reputation to a lesser man; and these continued to the end. He served on many an editorial board, and I shudder to think of the plethora of manuscripts he was asked to evaluate. The last letter I had from him, September 29, 1982, spoke of having "just got embroiled in two troublesome articles on which I was asked to report." Former students insisted on visiting him in his retirement and stayed long. "Each day of the holiday brings an old student for two or three hours, as usual. I do really appreciate such *pietas*, though it becomes a bit overwhelming" (December 31, 1974). Great teachers have to suffer this as gladly as they can.

In my 1961 *Milton Dictionary* I called James Holly Hanford the "dean of American Miltonists" and had no entry for Bush, who had not yet moved massively into Milton, as he was about to do. It was a logical, a natural, development. In 1964 he contributed an elegant critical biography to the Masters of World Literature series (the same auspices for his later *Keats*, *Matthew Arnold*, and *Jane Austen*). The year 1965 brought (besides the collected *Prefaces to Renaissance Literature*) a delightful surprise, a new edition by Bush of the Houghton Mifflin "Cambridge" *Complete Poetical Works* of Milton. One was not expecting this, since there had already been three Cambridge editions: William Vaughn Moody's in 1899 and 1924 (the latter with revisions by E. K. Rand of Moody's versions of the Latin poetry) and Harris Fletcher's completely new edition in 1941 (and Fletcher was still very much alive in 1965). This time Bush had his footnotes as well as glossary, and separate introductions; he completed the enterprise he had begun with *The Portable Milton*—a fresh translation of the Latin poems (one that put to shame another that had lately appeared wherein the editor, despite the availability of a half-dozen trots, committed one blunder after another). This Cambridge Milton has become standard for the general reader who wants a modernized text.

Bush was on the editorial board for the Yale *Complete Prose Works*, a lumbering, uneven undertaking typical of the platoon approach to scholarship, whereby it is reasoned that two editors must be better than one, and four better than two. (*A Milton Encyclopedia* has 159 contributors.) Bush was not active in the editing, which for volume 7 was so bad that it had to be recalled, like a defective automobile: it took the team six years to reissue it. But Bush was drawn into a parallel project, *A Variorum Commentary on Milton's Poems*, the first since Henry John Todd's in the nineteenth century. Bush's assignment was the Latin (and Greek) poems. He completed it in 1970—361 pages—a stupendous coverage of a relatively neglected area. (Meanwhile, for a general audience, there had been the Jayne Lectures at the American Philosophical Society, published in 1968 as *Pagan Myth and Christian Tradition in English Poetry*.)

There Bush's labors on the *Variorum* had been meant to end. His friend A. S. P. Woodhouse, of the University of Toronto, was working on the minor English poems. But Woodhouse died suddenly in October 1964, and Bush had to take over. In some ways it would have been easier if he had started from scratch. As he wrote: "In general, the effort to revise and complete the work of another man, especially of a very old and much admired friend, has involved endless difficulties." Unfair critics were to jeer at the spectacle of the difference of opinion between the editors: Bush suppressed neither Woodhouse nor him-

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self. Difference of opinion is, in any case, what a variorum is all about. There was also objection that, on a number of long-debated matters, Bush showed where his own preference lay. His reply was that he was not merely a recording machine. He was scrupulous in including whatever, however unlikely, had found its way into print, which is more than can be said for the editor of *Paradise Regained*, who was too enamored of his own views to produce a true variorum.

The three volumes on the minor poems, issued in 1972, came to 1,143 pages. "Lycidas," 193 lines, received 190 pages. Of course that contains the most famous crux in English literature, the problem of what Milton had in mind when he wrote, "But that two-handed engine at the door / Stands ready to smite once and smite no more." Bush analyzed forty-five explanations, based on a bibliography of one hundred items. So much for two lines. *Comus* was given 255 pages, "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," 114.

The teacher of England's second greatest poet, the curious amateur, the readier of an article or a book, was now provided with instant learning. No longer was there any excuse—if ever there had been—for fobbing off as new what, in fact, was old. (But it was also a stimulus to going on from there.) Someone had at last mastered and mustered and absorbed the immense and scattered commentary to date, often from sources available at too few libraries. It is a monument that will endure because it is resorted to all the time.

Of how many can it be said that they can generalize but are also respectful of detail? Quoting Shakespeare, Edward Armstrong remarked that scholars "are temperamentally inclined to be either 'of imagination all compact' or 'continual plodders.'" The broad-sweep people do not descend to footnotes, and the footnoters criticize the others as glib and unsound. In the Winter 1982/83 AMERICAN SCHOLAR, Arthur F. Stocker, writing on Bush's Harvard colleague Edward Kennard Rand, separated "the miners of data, who gather and sort diverse bits of new information that become building blocks out of which the edifices of the future can later be constructed" from the "somewhat rarer folk who can range widely over a broad area of knowledge, and who from extensive personal experience in that field are able to make valid syntheses and to offer securely based interpretations."

Bush was both kinds. No wonder he was an expert on Keats and Tennyson, with their love of a mythical past, and could say with Matthew Arnold, the subject of his 1971 book, "I am bound by my own definition of criticism: a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world."

The *Times* obituary wrongly stated that the Arnold book was Bush's last. The last was *Jane Austen*, which came out in 1975 (on the two hundredth anniversary of her birth) when he was seventy-nine. Again he had the problem of keeping a clear head above a large body of material. The Janeites are a busy cult. That novelist's "instinct for order and proportion," an instinct "both ethical and artistic," answered to something deep in her critic.

Bush was a conserver, not an innovator. It is interesting that one honor that never came to him was the presidency of the Modern Language Association, nor would he have wanted latterly to hold such a post in an organization that had deteriorated into an umbrella for warring political factions and discussion groups for increasingly bizarre topics. When I resigned (as many scholars did) in 1971, disgusted at the successful maneuvers of a radical clique, Douglas sympathetically noted that he could not make the same protest, because he was a life member.

Bush's six-by-seven-inch stationery was right for an epigrammatic style. In the summers his letters came from Norwich, Vermont, where he owned a farm until it became too difficult for him to make the annual move. He wrote from Cambridge at the beginning of June 1973: "I have just brought back our 1947 Ford from the garage where it was being activated after nine months in dead storage as usual. It is a gallant machine, something between a Lord Mayor's coach and a Brink's truck, which has become a moving landmark around Norwich and Hanover. The annual suspense over the question of its still running always deranges me." Still, he was not too old-fashioned to sit with his wife and watch the Boston Red Sox on television in the home they had bought in 1936 at 3 Clement Circle, Cambridge. There *was* a circular driveway, but of course the weather was far from clement. Clemency was not guaranteed even in

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Norwich, where in July 1973 they were marooned for a week by a flood that left them a crevasse in place of a lawn and a driveway. But Douglas was as hardy a scholar as I have ever known. When a burglar broke in at Cambridge, Bush, nearing eighty, came down from the bedroom in the middle of the night to investigate—and the culprit fled. Norwich didn't provide total security either: "All our firewood was stolen except a dozen little pieces and I must spend some time and energy in gathering branches to be cut up, for mornings are cold and evenings too cool for comfort. Apart from this and other Edenic activities I seem to have fallen into a loose schedule, reading Plato in the morning, Virgil in the afternoon, and Molière in the evening" (June 15, 1974).

In the introduction to *The Portable Milton*, he said of "Lycidas": "Of the subtle complexity of the texture there is no room to speak here; one begins to understand that, and the theme, only when one knows the poem by heart." Like Marjorie Nicolson, he knew a great deal of poetry by heart. When I dined at Clement Circle in the fall of 1974, he told me that when he could not sleep he went over lines in his mind. He was a natural reader from boyhood, and he had style because the best rubbed off on him. More, to borrow an epigram from his 1976 memorial essay on Lionel Trilling, he was one who "did not live to read but read to live." Of how many can that be said these days? We have professors who cannot write and whose interpretations show they cannot read—and all because they were never amateurs, never lovers. They read only for career reasons, not because they love to read. And they do not read much or move beyond a narrow round where they hope to publish. A liberal education does not, as Cardinal Newman sadly conceded, guarantee character, but it should do something for the mind. Douglas Bush embodied, because he had assimilated, the best of Western civilization.

The last I heard from him was a Christmas card (ten weeks before he died) in response to my having sent him some absurd light verse. Alluding to my retirement he wrote, "Your Miltonic verses seem to indicate a soul rejoicing in new-found freedom." "A soul rejoicing in new-found freedom"—what a meaning that has now!

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Yaz

DAVID WETMORE

In 1967 the Boston Red Sox won the American League pennant and went to the World Series. I, who grew up in Boston, was just turning seven years old, which was exactly the right age to be marked for life as a Red Sox fan. That same year a lean Boston Red Sox outfielder named Carl Yastrzemski won the batting Triple Crown, leading all other American League hitters in batting average, home runs, and runs batted in. Hooked, you might say, and double hooked: I had a team and I had a hero. I have been a Red Sox fan all my life; I expect to go to my grave a Red Sox fan; and through all these years, the Red Sox have seemed to me best represented by the spirit and quality of Carl Yastrzemski, or Yaz, as he is known in the press and to all Red Sox diehards like me. This spring, for the first time in twenty-four years, Carl Yastrzemski is not in a Red Sox uniform, and the feeling of his not being a member of the team is strange, even a little eerie.

To let you know at the outset the quality of fanatic you are dealing with here, I made it a point last year to travel from my present home in Minnesota to Boston to see Carl Yastrzemski play his last two games in Fenway Park. The first of these games, played on Saturday, October 1, 1983, dawned rainy and cold, soaking the crowd that waited hopefully in the street outside Fenway Park for the last thousand standing-room-only tickets to go on sale. The rain fell all weekend, but baseball was played both days, and the party for Yaz went off as scheduled. Because fans and sportswriters in Boston took the retirement of Carl Yastrzemski seriously, there was the not unfamiliar ceremony accompanying the retirement of a great athlete who has played out his career in a single city—ceremonies that have been accorded players from Lou Gehrig to Willie Stargell—with praise, applause, and gifts strewn around the infield. In Yaz's case all this was done, too, but the rain gave an oddly funereal cast to the proceedings, making one realize that the retirement of a great athlete represents a service for his death in miniature. Certainly the ceremony in honor of Carl Yastrzemski was a sad, even difficult one for Boston's fans and a no less difficult one for Yaz himself. Sitting in the stands, I felt a sense of loss.

Following certain teams brings with it an accompanying spiritual condition. To be a Chicago Cub fan is to live with a permanent condition of hopelessness, one that has been almost unrelieved for nearly four decades, as that team—as its fans bitterly joke—now enters the thirty-ninth year of its rebuilding program. To be a New York Yankee fan is to expect victory, and to turn instantly against one's team when it doesn't arrive. To be a Red Sox fan, though, is to live with constant hope. Growing up in Boston, I knew that I could not expect our team to win every summer. But some summers, when the Red Sox won, have been perfect. In 1967, when I first began following the team in earnest, we won a pennant, a Cy Young Award for pitching, and Yaz's Triple Crown. Another pennant in 1975 brought the best World Series—against the Cincinnati Reds—played in recent memory, a seven-game contest that a good many fans in Boston still refuse to admit we lost. In 1978 the Sox blew a big midseason lead, then battled back to tie the Yankees, the hated Yankees, on the last day of the season. Our loss in the play-off game never happened for some of us. The last pop fly never came down. The dream of winning again has continued over the years. Each spring the Red Sox slip

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off to training camp in Florida, and each March the word comes north: Maybe this year.

For myself, I keep the fan's faith, settling into the bleachers when I can and tuning in the televised games. By and large, it has been immensely rewarding. Like the Red Sox manager said back in 1967, "We'll win more than we lose." He was right then, and he remains right. For sixteen consecutive years the Red Sox played better than .500 ball. Throughout all those years Carl Yastrzemski was on the Red Sox. Last year the streak ended, and Yastrzemski retired. This year, as spring training got under way, Yaz wasn't there.

Every year I find myself falling under the spell of spring training, with all the hope that it promises for the year ahead. I wake up to reports from the Red Sox training camp in Winter Haven; these have always included Yaz's name in the box scores of Grapefruit League games. Each year I would follow his progress as he rounded into shape, noting the first home run he hit off veteran pitching. As Yaz went, so went the team, whose leader he has for so long been. Yaz and the Red Sox—that's how I have always thought about spring, for as long as I can remember.

I especially looked forward to last year, knowing it was to be Yaz's final season, though I did not know it at the outset. I learned it from a friend, who brought me an article by the sportswriter Leigh Montville from the March 22, 1983, *Boston Globe*, under the headline, "Yaz Has Gone Deep." A closeup photograph of the profile that Boston baseball fans have come to know so well carried the following caption from Montville's story: "This isn't some disposable hero. This is the perpetual Boston hero. The old-line hero. A landmark. Let these other cities buy and trade and deal for heroes. . . . That's right. Yaz." But in the story itself I first learned that Yaz had finally decided to call it quits. Somehow I had dreamily assumed he would go on forever, endlessly, year after year batting .280-plus, blasting fifteen or twenty home runs, knocking in eighty or so RBIs. But now he had announced that he would go through one more season and then retire. Knowing that 1983 would be Yaz's final year in baseball, I used it to look back as much as forward, reading old Red Sox yearbooks and rehashing Red Sox statistics, trying to recall as much about Carl Yastrzemski's career as I could and, while I was at it, looking into the career of that other Boston baseball legend, the one who came before Yaz.

Ted Williams is reported to have been the greatest natural hitter ever to have played baseball, a perennial all-star. Today he is a certified baseball legend. I never saw him play, but over the years I have been told stories about Ted Williams that have at least partially revealed to me the wonders that I missed. That Williams was a great player is plain; that he received an undeservedly bad press in Boston is also plain. I still do not know why the ill feeling that the reporters had for him carried over to affect the way his fans viewed him. One thing is clear: Williams never claimed the devotion of Red Sox fans. He surely never was allowed to feel the emotion that was bestowed upon Yaz, the man who replaced him in left field. For Williams's final game in Boston only ten thousand fans showed up. He responded to this rather sad turnout by creating his own fitting tribute and crashing a home run to center field his final time at bat. Circling the bases he ran quickly, unsmiling, displaying that stern pride and self-confidence that, resented though it was by Boston's sportswriters, was a hallmark of his magnificent career.

By contrast, when Yaz left the field for the last time on October 2, 1983, it was to tumultuous ovations from a full house. Before the game he stood in front of the Red Sox dugout to say good-bye for the last time. It was not the spectacle of the day before, when the gifts to him of new cars and a new fishing boat stood parked along the first-base line, but when the cheering subsided enough for him to be heard over the stadium's public address system, he made a short yet impressive speech. "As I look around the ball park today," he said, "I see signs that say, 'Say it ain't so, Yaz.' I wish it wasn't." The cheers roared once more as he stepped away from the microphone to join his teammates, who had assembled on the field. Then he stepped back to the microphone, said a few more words, and trotted his home-run trot around the field, shaking hands with those fans who had bunched themselves along the railings of the stands. People who had eaten a loaf or two of Yaz Bread in their day, or had shopped for cars at Yaz Ford, filled the stands. Many of them

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brought their children, who were just discovering baseball and would have to learn about Yaz when they grew older. But they were here today and would in future be glad of it.

At the 1983 All-Star game, Joe Cronin, one of the Red Sox great managers, for reasons known only to himself, told the press that Carl Yastrzemski was a better all-round ballplayer than Ted Williams, and that stirred up a great many older fans who thought otherwise. Yet comparisons between the two players are meaningless; each was of his time, and both were extraordinary. Yaz made no one forget Williams, but neither is his own record diminished by the Williams legend. For me, of course, for reasons of my age, Yaz will always be the man—my ideal of the heroic in sports.

Until the magical year 1967, I had been concerned with baseball solely through the games the kids in my neighborhood played in the schoolyard. I had had no sense of the institution known as the major leagues. I don't recall questioning why other people's names were written in the "autograph model" baseball gloves we kids used. But 1967 was a wonderful year for a kid from Boston to become interested in big-league baseball—better than 1975, when we knew from the start that we had a winning team; and certainly better than 1978, when it was a crime that, with such a solid team, we lost.

Still, in some ways it was a shame that 1967 was the start of my interest in baseball. It has provided me with a terrific high from which I have never quite come down. Nineteen sixty-seven was the year we won a pennant that was not decided until the last game of our season, the year we had Jim Lonborg (a twenty-game-winning pitcher), and the year Yaz brought off the miracle of the Triple Crown. In 1967 I was still too young to appreciate the statistical side of baseball, but I was nonetheless swept up in the general excitement of the season. I cheered wildly when number eight, Yaz, hit home runs, and I knew that I had nothing much to worry about when Lonborg was pitching. It was fun and it was beautiful, even to a kid of six.

In the years since 1967 Yaz had his share of rough spots. Memories of seasons that ended with his average hovering around .260 or when he had to struggle to drive in sixty runs are nearly as prominent in my mind as the memories of his good seasons. Some years, boos and catcalls rained down on him from the stands. There were not enough homers, his average was too low, he was accused of not hustling. The Red Sox played well, but they were unable to put together a string of championships, as the Boston Celtics had done in basketball. The feeling was that Yaz was letting us down; he wasn't giving us 1967 again. He gave us instead four dismal seasons between his last great year, 1970—when he hit forty home runs, 102 RBIs, and had a batting average of .329—and the year the Red Sox won the pennant again in 1975. Yaz's ninety-five RBIs and .295 average in 1973, followed by a .301 average in 1974, were impressive, but we Sox fans wanted more. We wanted 1967 again.

Fans are famously fickle—and cruel. With the introduction of the Red Sox starting lineup, Yaz's name usually brought cheers, but on a bad day, his appearance on the field and at the plate brought catcalls, epithets, moans. An out could cause him to be called a bum; a hit and he was a hero again. When Yaz came through I felt relief. Each time he stepped to the plate I felt a faint fear—the fear that some crucial failure on his part could make me turn against the hero of my childhood and stop following the Red Sox.

The 1975 Boston Red Sox gave us a very good year. It was a team led by our great rookie outfielders, Jim Rice and Fred Lynn. Yaz, it must be said, was not special in 1975. By then he had become the older ballplayer, the veteran who had a sense of where the team was headed, someone whom other players may have looked to on the bench and in the clubhouse, but who, on the field, played below his standard. It began to look as if it were time for him to pass the baton on to another, younger generation of players.

Then, at the close of the season, Jim Rice suffered a broken wrist as a result of being hit by a pitch. The three-time World-Series-winning Oakland A's came to Boston to begin a series that would decide the American League pennant. Without Jim Rice, things looked bleak. Yaz went from first base back to his old spot in left field for the series opener in Fenway Park. Suddenly, it was almost as if 1967 were being replayed; Yaz did everything. He made sparkling defensive plays (of a kind that the rookie Rice, at that time, could not have made), and he hit as he had not hit all

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season. His batting average in the Red Sox surprising three-game sweep of the A's was .455. He had four assists from left field, made no errors, and in one unforgettable play he dove across the outfield grass to grab a Reggie Jackson line drive that was headed for the wall and extra bases. Yaz held Jackson to a single, keeping the tying run at first base in the eighth inning of what was to be the final game of the series. Yaz's play ended Oakland's threat; the next hitter bounced into a double play, and Boston had another pennant. Yaz's performance against Oakland made the championship perfect; the team seemed a fine union of younger and older players. Best of all, Yaz proved that he still had it.

In his twenty-three-year career with the Boston Red Sox, Carl Yastrzemski compiled superior statistics in less than half his seasons. In 1977, his seventeenth year in the big leagues, Yaz finished his last successful season with twenty-eight home runs, 102 RBIs, a .296 batting average, and the last of his seven Golden Glove awards for fielding. He could still play the game, no question about it, but often he seemed to be working with something held in reserve. He called on that little bit extra in important games and he must have called on it, too, to play while wrapped in yards of tape used to bind his endless, nagging injuries: the weak wrist, the sore ankles, the strained back. His seasonal averages might have been even more impressive if he had been able to play at full tilt every day, but he probably owed the longevity of his career to his ability to pace himself. I'll take the longevity. Throughout his long career Yaz was very good; at times he was great; and he never really faded.

The Boston sports press, which some say is the toughest in the country, has been up and down on Yaz. In his early years, it pictured him coming of age as an acknowledged leader in the clubhouse, helping younger players without criticizing them, keeping the Sox together as a team: it is the picture of the completely selfless athlete, Frank Merriwell at Fenway Park. With later years, however, the negative stories started to flow: Yaz doesn't hustle, Yaz no longer cares, Yaz is aloof, Yaz is concerned only about number eight. Yet somehow, perhaps through sheer endurance, Yaz rose above all these stories and played his way through twenty-three years to become the forty-four-year-old athlete standing beside his manager in the Red Sox dugout, respected by everyone who cares about the game of baseball.

The *New Yorker* writer Roger Angell, himself a Boston Red Sox fan, has written that "there is more involved in baseball than the accomplishments of a few athletes and teams." There is, for one thing, the game itself. There is a structure to baseball different from the structure of all other games; it is a structure—if you will forgive that vague word—that never quite follows the laws of the universe as they pertain to everyday life. The game of baseball enacts fantasy, drama, and tragedy on a wide stage, in a spectacle that lasts for more than six months every year, with ups and downs reversing and repeating themselves in daily episodes.

When I read the box scores every day with my morning coffee, noting the hits, runs, and errors, it strikes me that following a baseball team offers me not only an escape from the daily grind of my life, but something of a parallel to it in the way that it encompasses both the easy and the difficult portions of life. Baseball is a game most American men have played in their youth, and as such, it is a game that, in odd ways, recaptures our youth. The simplicity of its fundamental confrontations—throwing and hitting, catching and running—is part of its charm. It is a game with a long tradition behind it. It is also a game of skill and violence and control, a game of waiting and of unleashed energy quickly checked. It is, above all, a game of individuals meeting tests; it's not a team game at all, really. Each act of pitching, swinging, running, or fielding is an isolated moment frozen and apart from the rest of the game—acts that each player must perform alone. The play is made: hit or error, safe or out. And then the game repeats itself, the same hitters and pitchers and fielders facing one another again and again over nine innings, day after day, throughout the long season. The repeated chances for success or failure over 162 games make baseball a game of survivors as much as of winners.

Carl Yastrzemski has been one of baseball's great survivors. As has become increasingly rare in modern-day baseball, he played out his entire career with one team. He is wholly and solely identified with Fenway Park, one of the oldest ball parks left in baseball, with the

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goofy angles and corners in its outfield, its stands jutting out into the field, and its famous left-field wall (known as the Green Monster), in front of which he stood for the better part of his career. Yastrzemski standing in the outfield—the features of his face worn smooth and rounded by the weather, creased by lines of concentration, his hair gray at the temples—perfectly fit my image of baseball as something storybook yet real, as something grand and symbolic and lasting. Even in defeat he managed to maintain dignity. The memories of the great years of Yaz end with him at the plate at Fenway Park, flying out to end the World Series against the Reds in 1975 and popping up for the final out of the 1978 play-off game against the Yankees, a game that began with his hitting a home run. His career ended at Fenway Park, too, when, after singling to left and walking in his earlier appearances at the plate, Yaz hit a towering pop fly in his last time at bat, and the ball landed in the second-baseman's glove.

For that final game Yaz was back in left field. Early in the game, with a runner on second base, he charged a ground-ball single and came up throwing, looking as he had in my earliest memory of him. But taking the ball off the wet outfield grass, he made a terrible throw; the ball bounced at shortstop and rolled weakly through the infield to the plate. He turned and walked back to his position, looking toward the center fielder as though unable to explain what had happened. Then, later in the game, Toby Harrah, batting for Cleveland, hit a line drive halfway up the wall in left-center field. Yaz was waiting for the ball as it came off the wall, and he fielded it cleanly. Then he turned and threw in one motion. It wasn't a spectacular play—he had done it hundreds of times before—but it was nice. His throw was a perfect strike to second base, holding Harrah at first with a long Fenway Park single. The applause was appreciative—a small sign of what was to come.

Yaz went out to left field to start the eighth inning after having popped out in the bottom of the seventh, but when he reached his position, a replacement came onto the field. Yaz trotted back in, shaking hands with his teammates and waving to the crowd. He stood in front of the dugout, the stadium lights shining down on him as he turned and saluted the crowd in each corner of the ball park. He looked once more around the field and reached to his uniform shirt. Unbuttoning it, he walked to the dugout and removed his Red Sox jersey number eight, showing it to the fans before he tossed it into the dugout and made his departure. The ovation and game continued, the overcast sky lightened, the clouds broke up. It was an early October baseball afternoon again when Yaz stepped to the top of the dugout steps and satisfied his fans with one final wave. From my seat in the stands, I felt, along with much else, gratitude and a sense of privilege in having grown up watching this man play ball.

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Soul Food

CHARLES L. GRISWOLD, JR.

STATECRAFT AS SOULCRAFT: WHAT GOVERNMENT DOES. *By George F. Will. Simon & Schuster. $13.95.*

The questions George Will raises in *Statecraft as Soulcraft* are good ones, and even if his answers to them are questionable, his effort deserves praise. Professional philosophers who dismiss the book as an example of second-rate scholarship and argumentation ill understand the central paradox of political life to which Plato's famous notion of the "philosopher king" is meant to be a solution. To put the matter rather simply, philosophers who can give good answers to Will's questions are not in a position to convey them to the educated public, and with rare exceptions, the "commentators" who do have access to the mass media are hopelessly incompetent from a philosophical standpoint. Will, a former professor of political philosophy who was educated at Princeton, Oxford, and Trinity College, is among the very best of America's columnists, and his widely disseminated views are listened to by the president, congressmen, and a respectable portion of the educated public. He is thus in a unique position to help remedy a condition he so accurately describes when he writes: "In the twentieth century we seem to have lost the knack—or taste—for defining our policy choices with reference to philosophical fundamentals."

Will's book is, among other things, a case for the reintroduction of philosophy into political discourse. America is a nation founded explicitly and self-consciously on philosophical principles. The understanding of and deliberation about these principles constitutes a field of properly "political" reflection, as distinct from, say, the analyses of economics. Will convincingly argues that politics and economics are not only separate endeavors, but also that the former regulates (and ought to regulate) the latter. Such criticisms as I shall make of Will's book are not intended to deny my fundamental agreement with this argument.

The general motive for writing the book arises out of Will's repeatedly stated view that American society is crumbling and so is becoming increasingly vulnerable to those (Communist) regimes Will refers to as "barbarian." In this respect *Statecraft as Soulcraft* is part of the "crisis" literature so common in American history (the subject of the final chapter of Will's book is the always fascinating, and always troubling, question of the seemingly inevitable decay of nations). Will's concern about the health of contemporary America is based on empirical observations, and here he is, in my opinion, on solid ground. It is indeed hard to deny that there is something radically unsatisfactory about the way in which business is conducted in Washington today. Self-interest and extreme pluralism rule all. Our statesmen seem unable to articulate any overarching value except that expressed by the residual emotion of patriotism still alive in many Americans. Appeals to the common good or to self-restraint on any other grounds seem ineffective. Government is paralyzed by the endless power plays of well-organized interest groups intent on getting what they can from the government. The lawyers are everywhere, dreams of profit in their eyes, and nary a thought of justice in their minds. Will worries about our determination to sustain a credible national de-

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fense, a position that inevitably entails the sacrifice of American lives in foreign places and may well entail the resumption of conscription. His thesis is that ideas have consequences; we will survive only if we understand ourselves better. Thus he compares his book with St. Augustine's *De civitate Dei*. I agree with him that our nation requires citizens trained in the habits of good citizenship if it is to survive. Economic incentives are not enough.

The title of the book reflects two of George Will's theses. The first is that what government does is "soulcraft"—that is, Will is not out to prove that governments *ought* to start influencing the characters and habits of its citizens, since he thinks that it is empirically true that they already do so, though frequently in unsatisfactory ways. "Statecraft" (by which Will means, at a minimum, the exercise of government) is fundamentally tied to moral issues; the activities of government necessarily reflect a conception of justice, of right and wrong. As Will puts it at one point, statecraft is "applied political philosophy."

Will states this first thesis in both hedged and unqualified terms. If he means that the justification of a state's practice or theory of politics must appeal—whether the citizens of a state know it or not—to philosophical principles, he is absolutely right. From this it follows that the distinction between the common good and the individual's rights, which is standard in liberal democratic societies such as ours, rests on philosophical and moral assumptions. Will convincingly offers the example of abortion: in arguing whether or not the government should regulate abortions, one is taking a philosophical and moral position. Since government does mold (through the tax codes, to take another example) the behavior of those who live under it, Will also wants to hold that "ideas have consequences." Will's best example of this view is, I think, that of the civil rights laws and their salutary effects on the way in which Americans think about race. It comes as no surprise to learn that Lincoln is George Will's favorite president.

A second thesis reflected in the title of the book can be formulated in terms of the general contrast between "ancients" and "moderns." The reference in the title to "soul" evokes premodern political philosophy. While no one today talks about "soul" in a political context, the views of Plato and Aristotle (not to mention Cicero, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas) cannot be stated without reference to the soul. If statecraft is soulcraft, *true* statecraft is not practiced today. The title of the book, then, alludes not only to an empirical proposition (government rests on philosophical principles) but to a normative one (contemporary government is deficient insofar as it does not orient itself to the soul). There is an ambiguity here. Will wants to hold both that governments shape the soul, whether they want to or not, and that modern liberal-democratic regimes are deficient because they are explicitly constructed so as *not* to shape the soul (Will speaks of their "abandonment of soulcraft"). Will wants to resolve the ambiguity by arguing that the soul is always present but can be nurtured or starved by better or worse governments. Of course, not only does this argument sound ancient rather than modern, but so does Will's conviction that nourishing soul food (the expression is Plato's) requires knowledge of good and evil, that is, that it requires philosophy.

Yet another of Will's theses is that all of modern political philosophy is inferior to ancient political philosophy. The villains in this story are Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Hume, Smith, and the Founding Fathers (as well as, we learn in passing, Marx and his progeny). The heroes are Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Burke (the modern exponent of classical political philosophy). Will's complicated thesis about ancient and modern political philosophy serves as a basis for the particular, almost equally complicated, thesis that is at the core of the book.

Will argues that the American founding is flawed because it expresses the standpoint of modernity. The "philosophic premises of our nation," Will writes, are "defective." He means primarily that the Founding Fathers viewed man in terms of passion rather than reason. In particular Will suggests that they considered the ends of man to be determined by passion, reason being an instrument for attaining them; that they began with a doctrine of individual rights rather than of the common good or of duty to a higher norm; that they espoused a doctrine of "possessive individualism" rather than of man's "social" nature; and that, correspondingly, they viewed

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the functions of government as strictly limited to providing the conditions necessary for the individual's pursuit of his private goals. The liberal-democratic view is that the state is like a night watchman. This view rests on the proposition that the state is concerned only with that aspect of a man's "external behavior" which seriously impinges on the rights of others but is not concerned with his inner life or values. Will declares: "The purpose of this book is to say why that proposition is radically wrong." Obviously, Will cannot argue this thesis, or his general view about the quarrel between ancients and moderns, without making a number of specific claims about the history of ideas. Hence, as he notes, "This book is, in part, an exercise in intellectual archeology."

Of course, Will also thinks of himself as a conservative, but in the sense that harks back to ancient philosophy. He correctly points out that contemporary conservatism, like the liberalism with which it is "only marginally disharmonious," is a product of modern political philosophy. Therefore, "I am arguing that there are almost no conservatives, properly understood" (the *almost*, one gathers, is necessary to allow for Will himself). Will's criticisms of contemporary libertarian conservatism are among the most persuasive sections of the book.

How well does Will defend his various theses? Since his diagnosis of and cure for the American malaise depends heavily on a reading of the history of ideas, we can begin by asking how accurate his reading is. Here it is necessary to point out that Will's scholarship is, strictly speaking, extraordinarily sloppy. Had he published this book as an academic, his reputation would have been seriously compromised.

Will starts off by misspelling the Latin title of Augustine's book (p. 15). In chapter 2, note 1, he does not cite the title of another book accurately. In note 9 he misspells the name of the editor of Hume's *Treatise* and both omits the page number and uses a partially unintelligible citation method. (To what does the "3" in "II, iii, 3" refer? Not the paragraph in question.) In note 10 he mistakenly cites "Harrison" as the editor of the 1948 Macmillan edition of Bentham's *Introduction*. In note 16 the citation of Spinoza makes no sense (there is no "I, iii, Preface" of the *Ethics*). In note 17 Will cites not Smith's text proper, as Will's note would suggest, but the editor of Smith's book; and Will's quotation on page 34 from Smith includes material not quoted by that editor. Because the editor does not give the page number of his quotation from Smith, the reader is left wondering (perhaps Will is wondering, too) where Smith says what Will says he says (the correct page number of the edition in question is 381). Will also cites a nonexistent publisher for the edition in question. In chapter 3, note 24, Will cites Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, but gives the wrong section and line numbers. In chapter 4, note 23, Will cites, without explanation, an obsolete and therefore obscure edition of Hume's *Philosophical Essays*, even though a more accessible, and presumably more accurate, Oxford edition is available. (I suspect that here, and elsewhere, Will just cited whatever editions of books he has in his personal library.) In note 41 Will misspells the translator's name and cites the wrong chapter. Similarly, in chapter 7, note 1, Will cites a nonexistent "p. 2691" of an edition of Plato's *Republic*, the translator of which was hitherto unknown (a Mr. "Cornfeld"), and also cites the Stephanus pages of Plato's text loosely. Throughout the notes Will uses "ibid." incorrectly (Will's editor at Simon & Schuster must be unacquainted with the meaning of the term). Furthermore, on page 32 Will quotes Hume but reverses the order of two words. On page 39 he quotes from Locke but alters the punctuation, italics, and capitalization of the edition he is using. Will's quotation from Jefferson on page 71 also alters the original. On page 90 he quotes from Aristotle but again alters the text of the translation. On page 91 he inaccurately suggests that in the *Crito* Socrates is visited by several friends, whereas in that dialogue only Crito visits Socrates. On pages 105–6 Will appears to quote an author who is quoting from John Marshall, but Will splits the quote up in a way that changes its sense and leaves out several words. Even two of Will's quotations on page 155 from articles by his own father omit important words and introduce new words not in the original.

The reader will understand why I decided not to check the remainder of Will's citations. From a scholarly standpoint, his "intellectual archeology" is messy, but might not its general findings be right? Will's contrast between

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ancients and moderns will sound very familiar to readers of Leo Strauss's writings (it is odd that Will does not cite Strauss). Nevertheless, Will vastly oversimplifies the point. Both ancient and modern political thought are more complex than Will allows. For example, the Greek sophists, as well as Rousseau, Kant, and Hegel, do not fit easily into Will's generalizations. Still more important, Will's portrayal of the Founding Fathers as unequivocal advocates of self-interest and individualism is, I think, one-sided. Strangely enough, Will's own comments about the founding suggest that the picture is more complicated: "And the Founders sometimes preached something other than thoroughgoing modernity." Will does not give sufficient consideration to Jefferson's concern with the transformation of the "natural aristocracy" into the nation's leaders or to the role that the Founders thought religion was to play in American life. Yet Will's discussion of education and the intentions of the Founders indicates that the Founders very much wanted to shape the character of citizens. Will does not consider the possibility—for which there is evidence—that even Madison thought of the Constitution as instilling virtue in precisely the sense defined by Will on page 134. Thus Will is forced to the unfortunate conclusion that "the society the Founders lived in . . . did not practice the modernity the Founders preached."

Indeed, Will's discussion—starting in chapter 3 with the assertion that "modernity is an urban phenomenon"—of "twentieth-century intellectual life and politics" and his views expressed later in the book suggest that radical individualism made its way into the American understanding of government *after* the founding. Will seems to agree with Madison that the danger of tyrannical majorities is great and endorses the "precautions established by the framers of the Constitution." Will's own praise of Lincoln should give him pause, for Lincoln thought of himself as reaffirming the nation's founding ideals. As Will himself notes, it was Douglas who "reduced politics to material and economic factors" and so misunderstood our founding ideals. Does Will dispute Lincoln's own self-understanding? It is strange, moreover, that Will doesn't consider the view that our present malaise is due not to these ideals but to the Court's interpretation of them. Finally, it is impossible to understand what sort of modernity the Founders preached without a thorough examination of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and Will supplies no such examination.

Will's intellectual archeology, then, is not persuasive, although its findings are not wholly erroneous. It follows that his interpretation of the causes of and cure for today's thoroughgoing American modernity is not persuasive. Even if his interpretation of modern and ancient thought was completely correct, Will supplies only one argument against modernity—namely, that it has led to a lack of social cohesion in American politics. And, even if this argument was sound, it does not show that (if I may use the terms loosely) the ancients are superior to the moderns.

Will never defines what is meant by *soul;* and when he adumbrates the tremendous difficulties that face anyone who invokes the notion today, he not only fails to resolve the difficulties but even seems at one point to agree that they are decisive. Will's definition of "virtue" corresponds to what Plato called "demotic" (or "popular") virtue, and this definition alone is scarcely enough to resuscitate the distinctive view of the matter held by Plato and Aristotle. Will asserts the classical view that "natural right" (whose relationship to "natural law" Will does not explain) is "a great given," but that is precisely what is in dispute. He further asserts that "the basic political right is to good government, not self-government," but supplies no proof of this sweeping proposition. Don't people have a right to govern themselves poorly?

Will sees that egalitarianism is a central tenet of modernity; but it is not a tenet of ancient political philosophy. Does Will want to give up egalitarianism (recall that Aristotle had a doctrine of natural slavery)? Are the notions of liberty and justice that underlie the American regime really so ignoble? Will does not face the modern criticims of the ancients to the effect that the latter's doctrine is unjust (because non-egalitarian) as well as unworkable. Will's praise of the ancients and his new conception of conservatism hold water only if he can rebut these criticisms; but he does not do so. He must show what the moderns, but not the ancients, doubt—that, as an empirical matter, the many cannot be made virtuous. The moderns do not hold that ideas have *no*

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influence on behavior but that the particular ideas praised by the ancients do not in fact do so (at one point Will seems to grant that under some historical conditions this is true). The actual practice of the ancients, as the moderns remind us over and over again, varies not at all from that of the moderns; deeds speak louder than words. Will seems to grant that he cannot prove and has not proven the empirical point in question. He infers that, since it is difficult to determine the empirical truth of the matter, statesmen should worry not about which view is true but about which is more prudent (p. 26). The inference is a non sequitur that undermines Will's own argument. His critique of modernity, and of the American founding in particular, hinges on his rejection of the familiar construal of the distinction between a man's external behavior and his inner life (only the former being the proper concern of government). Although Will discusses the matter in chapter 4, he does not provide a theory that explains either where the distinction (which is a complicated one) in fact lies or where it should lie. For example, the view (to which Will has objected elsewhere) that the decision to have an abortion is up to the individual and not the state is consistent with Will's view that the issue of whether or not abortion should be a private decision is itself a moral and political issue. Will doesn't say much to help us sort out this complex situation.

Let us imagine, however, that Will's book suffered from none of these difficulties. What does Will offer as a remedy for our present malaise? In chapter 6 he briefly sketches some reforms he would propose—tuition tax credits, for example—for his "welfare state," and he seems willing to admit that the present version of that state is sorely wanting. A number of ingenious reforms along these lines have already been proposed by the libertarians. What specifically does Will offer that is new? A rewriting of the Constitution to overcome the defects of modernity? An end to the separation between church and state? *Statecraft as Soulcraft* leaves the reader in suspense. The author is limited in his choices for reform because he agrees that it is impossible to introduce reforms successfully into a society at the wrong historical moment. At some point Will must explain what a return to classical political philosophy amounts to. Here he should keep in mind Nietzsche's wise remark: "*Whispered to the conservatives* . . . today too there are still parties whose dream it is that all things might walk backwards like crabs. But no one is free to be a crab."

Castles in the Air

JOHN SOANE: THE MAKING OF AN ARCHITECT. *By Pierre de la Ruffinière du Prey. University of Chicago Press. $37.50.*

Reviewed by ROGER LEWIS

Sir John Soane is an architect who ensured that a building became the candid exoskeleton of its inhabitant. His masterpiece was his own refuge in Lincoln's Inn Fields, London: a private museum in which Soane himself was the chief exhibit. Perhaps he still is. For though he died in the same year that Victoria became queen (his own style of eccentric clutter being developed by the next generation as the normal manner of stocking a room), his personality still infuses the dwelling that he bequeathed to the nation. As Professor du Prey has noticed, "his bust scans the visitor, his portrait gazes on, reflected countless times in a looking glass." The very items in this magpie's nest are also linked to their collector: Soane preserved all his jottings and designs for posterity; plaster casts were made of the masonry he had studied; annotated guidebooks of his travels await the scrutiny of the scholar.

The Soane Museum is his masterpiece because into it he conflated all his obsessions and fads: it is architecture as autobiography. *The Making of an Architect*, a miracle of scholarly scrupulosity, devotes itself to discussing precisely how this extraordinary man set about inventing his own mind. Du Prey's book is the portrait of the artist as a young man. Much time and energy has been devoted to an analysis of the papers and ledgers Soane stored for the attentions of such a disciple as

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has now appeared. What, in fact, emerges in this study, apart from a picture of the fledgling architect, is a history of the inception of professional architecture itself. Through egotistically organizing his private archive, Soane coincidentally has enabled du Prey to pick up clues out of which a wider story has been assembled. The danger here, as I shall show, is that Soane's idiosyncratic importance tends to be devalued once he has been fitted into the activities of his peers. Sometimes, because Soane throughout this book is merely an apprentice, du Prey resorts to a discussion of a background that obliterates the main actor we have come to see. Soane, a poet, is made prosaic.

John Soane's career began as a humble amanuensis to feckless George Dance. Soane's master was well traveled and well versed in the literature and buildings of the Greeks and Romans. The design for a *magnifica galleria* (1763) much influenced Soane, who always recalled "the strong chiaroscuro effects and sober classicism of these marbled halls." Du Prey speculates that Soane eventually betook himself from Dance's employ because he had been sneered at for his unglamorous origins. Indeed, the Soane Museum is remarkable for its lack of material appertaining to childhood. It appears to be a part of his life that Soane censored.

The competition for the designing of St. Luke's Hospital is an instance of what could be termed Dance's high-handed attitude. Advertisements began to appear in newspapers in April 1777 from a committee "desirous to avail themselves of the Ideas of various Artists, in order to enable them to fix upon the best Design for an Hospital for Lunaticks." Soane submitted two full sets of plans. Yet there was no guarantee that the victor would receive the actual commission. Also, all the contributed sketches and drawings were to become the legal property of the trustees. The winner turned out to be James Gandon (a rival of Soane's at the Royal Academy), but the commission went to Dance, who happened to be the son of the asylum's founder.

With all the ideas of the contestants at hand, it is likely that Dance was empowered to tinker with them and amalgamate them with his own sketches as he pleased. The completed building is almost a composite of all the ideas from "such Persons as may be inclinable to produce drawings of their own Invention." Du Prey observes that the placement of privies and hydrotherapy baths and the designs for the apothecary's shop and the drying yard for linen stem from Soane's contributions. Dance, with some irony, allowed his apprentice the glory of a water closet and the tedium of having to prepare the accounts for the final estimate.

For du Prey this episode "gives a rare insight into methods eighteenth-century architects employed in gathering data for a project." It also shows how a neophyte is exploited by his elders. It taught Soane lessons he would not forget. It adumbrated his competitiveness, energy, and the need for resilience. These talents were also required during the most important period of Soane's career, his time at the Royal Academy.

Each year a gold medal was awarded for the best design on a set subject. Students competed anonymously, shielding their identities with a motto. In 1774 (the subject was A Gentleman's Town House) Soane finished third. Du Prey criticizes this attempt "to cram the interior with every imaginable complex room shape." Yet surely Soane's breathless house is precocious rather than foolhardy. The miscellany of styles, the busyness of the building, prefigures Soane's mature style. Also, if Joyce's Stephen Dedalus is to be believed, a genius makes no mistakes. For du Prey, "his town house verged unpardonably on the vulgar." To the taste of the Augustans, perhaps it was; yet, for the Romantic age, into which Soane would survive, it would have been innovative and exciting.

For fame Soane had to wait until 1776 when he completed the work known as A Triumphal Bridge. His design is less of a ford than a city traversing a stream. What for a town house seemed crammed could in a work of public architecture expand to fill the space necessary for its completion. The bridge design is an assemblage of pilastered promenades, recesses for statues, and domed chambers: "People agreed that Soane had created an architecture for a British master-race, a race of giants and heroes." It is also a design that had no intention of being erected. It is conceived and built in the imagination.

Soane's bridge joined imperial Rome to neoclassic England. In 1777 the Royal Academy dispatched the prizewinner to Italy in

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order for him to scrutinize the original ruins. Encountering the remains of antiquity, Soane learned their secrets and imported them via his notebooks back to his burgeoning archives. Soane also met wealthy grand tourists who promised to enhance his career. Yet his potential patrons often failed to carry through their good intentions. Nearly sixty years later Soane would recall "the magnificent promises and splendid delusions" of the Bishop of Derry. Soane was to spend his time inventing pleasure domes that would remain, like the palace of Kubla Khan, only on paper.

Apart from trying to garner work, Soane visited, sketched, and discussed dozens of buildings. He immersed himself in the ancients. He annotated and corrected the official guidebooks in his possession. As du Prey tells us, these copious scribbles now "fill various nooks and crannies of Soane's house, constituting a remarkable collection. From the comfort of Lincoln's Inn Fields, Soane had the world at his doorstep." Du Prey here makes a rare slip: in his old age Soane could travel the world without ever having to leave his study. The doorstep was unnecessarily distant.

In order that he should not be overawed by the great buildings of the past, the Royal Academy stipulated that its traveling scholar should "send home annually a Performance for the Exhibition." In 1779 Soane sent a virtuosic design for a British senate house. Again it is an instance of mental architecture, envisioning Parliament housed within a Roman temple. For in Italy Soane had been developing his propensity to enjoy the fantastical: he was excited by the Prince of Palagonia's villa at Bagheria, in which entire rooms and all their furniture had been lined with mirrors. He was fascinated with the Museo Pio-Clementino in the Vatican and the museum in the Villa Albani in which sculptures were artistically rather than historically arranged.

Du Prey, a sober guide, does not like to press the significance of Soane's proclivities. He prefers instead to dwell upon a painstaking discussion of the architect's income and dealings with surveyors. He wants to see Soane taking his place in the profession rather than what appears, to my view, to be the architect's willful development in opposition to it. Architecture is literally mundane; Soane wishes his constructions to effloresce into art. From the start he designed buildings as repositories for his imagination: mausoleums, for example, would contain the thrilling sensations death aroused. The structures allowed a combination of a heroic war memorial with a fashionable flight of fancy. Soane's James King Mausoleum is flanked by Egyptian pyramids, so that pharaonic grandeur embraces a classical temple. These key works, which were of course never built, elicit the feelings Addison found when regarding "The Tombs in Westminster Abbey": "The gloominess of the place, and the use to which it is applied, are apt to fill the mind with a kind of melancholy that is not disagreeable."

Du Prey also censures Soane's *Designs in Architecture* (1778) because of its "innate contradictions." But surely the ability to remain ruled by diversity and not by a single conception is to Soane's credit. He had the energy to design vast public halls on the one hand and rustic dairies on the other. These latter exercises are particularly interesting. The year 1781 saw Soane pandering to the fad for aristocratic ladies to play at milkmaids. At Hammels Park, columns with entwined leaves support a thatched roof; it is a rustic temple, an artificial little low content. The landed gentry intended to build for themselves private pastorals, toy Edens.

Involving himself with such a game, Soane had discovered in reality an activity little different from his own pursuits—that architecture is a means of submersion in a private fantasy. The most important commission in Soane's life, the Bank of England, worked on the same principle. The power of money is a suspension of disbelief that notes, coins, and checks have a real value. The physical presence of a bank symbolizes the existence of intangible assets. The Bank of England represents a chimera that belongs to the same breed as a pastoral dairy. Money is made manifest in the same way as paradise is in a rural park.

In *The Poetry of Architecture,* published the year Soane died, Ruskin said that "the high and ennobling art of architecture is that of giving to buildings, whose parts are determined by necessity, such forms and colours as shall delight the mind." Soane had comprehended this psychological element perfectly. He once described the facade of his house "as

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a picture, a sort of portrait." To enter the house, therefore, must be like stepping inside a frame, penetrating the proscenium to enter the domain of art. Treading into a building can be like going through a looking glass.

Soane's early, unbuilt works were assembled by Joseph Gandy in a picture of 1820 called *Architectural Visions*. The painting is an epical, Romantic fantasy that collects Soane's designs and models and arranges them as a visionary city of palaces. A figure sits in the foreground, waving in the direction of the metropolis, a gesture like that of Browning's magus, "Arise Veronal!" Soane made himself as an architect by building his castles in the air and his mansions in the skies.

Zeal Let Loose

THE ROSENBERG FILE: A SEARCH FOR THE TRUTH. *By Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton. Holt, Rinehart & Winston. $22.50.*

Reviewed by JACOB A. STEIN

Two books about celebrated criminal trials have appeared in recent years, and in both books the authors state that they undertook the work in the belief that the defendant, who was found guilty, was actually innocent. The authors go on to say that they held tenaciously to the belief in innocence until the evidence that they analyzed and uncovered forced them to conclude that the defendant was in fact guilty. This rhetorical device is an interesting way of purchasing a rather high level of credibility.

The most recent book to use this technique is *The Rosenberg File*. The other book is Allen Weinstein's account of the Alger Hiss case, *Perjury*. Mr. Radosh states in a prefatory note that he took it as a matter of faith that the Rosenbergs were victims of a conspiracy. The book that follows disproves this by making a detailed examination of the evidence, the trial, and the sentencing. Ronald Radosh and Joyce Milton conclude that Julius Rosenberg was guilty of giving highly classified information about the atom bomb to Russian agents and that Ethel Rosenberg must have known what Julius was doing. Although the Rosenbergs' defense counsel were inept, the verdict was based on credible evidence. The death sentence was too harsh in Julius's case, and it was improperly used in Ethel's case as a lever to force a confession from Julius.

If one looks at the Rosenberg case from a criminal defense lawyer's point of view, one must say that the Rosenbergs were unacquittable. The weight of the evidence and the fact that the Rosenbergs asserted Fifth Amendment rights during their cross-examinations made them unacquittable. The most optimistic criminal defense lawyer would lose all hope if his client testified fully on direct examination and then refused to answer relevant questions put on cross-examination because the answers might tend to incriminate him. This is what each of the Rosenbergs did. They refused to answer the question of whether or not they were members of the Communist party. It was clearly a relevant question. It went to motive. The refusal to answer—coupled with rebuttal evidence tending to show that Ethel and Julius Rosenberg had, shortly before their arrest, considered fleeing to France—extinguished any hope of an acquittal. Add to that the question of why Ethel Rosenberg's brother, David Greenglass, would turn on his own sister, and you have the insoluble dilemma.

Julius Rosenberg's lawyer, Emmanuel Bloch, has been criticized severely for the way he conducted the defense. But those who have criticized him may not appreciate fully his difficulties. The main criticism leveled at Bloch is that he did not challenge the government's assertion that the information that David Greenglass obtained while working at Los Alamos was of great value to Russia. Bloch conceded that this information was valuable, because a challenge to the assertion would have contained a tacit concession that Julius Rosenberg was in some way connected with the evidence. If Julius Rosenberg was unconnected with it, as he contended, then Bloch's strategy was consistent with Julius Rosenberg's testimony.

Those who contend that the Rosenbergs were innocent argue that the key witness against the Rosenbergs, David Greenglass, is a liar who sought to save himself by implicating his sister and brother-in-law. David

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Greenglass gave a series of statements to the FBI, which Emmanuel Bloch did not have. If the Rosenbergs' case were tried today, the defense counsel would be given all of David Greenglass's pretrial statements as an aid to their cross-examination of him. Nevertheless, Greenglass's statements would have been of little assistance on cross-examination because there were few differences between his trial testimony and his statements to the FBI. Radosh and Milton have analyzed all the pretrial statements of all the witnesses and compared them with the trial testimony of each witness. They have done this more carefully, and probably with more skill, than could any defense lawyer, who must make such comparisons within a very limited time and who is always distracted by numerous compelling problems associated with an ongoing trial.

With respect to the question of the death sentence, the authors outline reasons for doubting the usefulness to the Russians of the information that Julius Rosenberg supplied. But they also point out that there are those with competent credentials who believe that the information was very helpful to Russia. It seems rather clear that the Russians had a much better source of information than Julius Rosenberg. They had as their informant Klaus Fuchs, who was a physicist working on the project. Fuchs confessed and was tried in England, where he received a prison term of fourteen years.

The evidence seems to establish that the trial judge, Irving R. Kaufman, had made up his mind to consider the death penalty before the trial began. He wanted support from the Department of Justice for the penalty, but support was not forthcoming. He even had private conferences with the prosecutors concerning the penalty. On the whole, Judge Kaufman's conduct demonstrates a marked departure from proper judicial conduct.

In the case of Ethel Rosenberg, the death penalty was used to force a confession from Julius Rosenberg. The government was very interested in obtaining a confession from him because it was clear that he had much information to give. A number of people with whom Julius Rosenberg had been dealing fled once suspicion fell on him. The government had a legitimate interest in these people, and it was hoped that Julius Rosenberg would lay out the workings and the personnel of the spy network in which he was involved. The FBI hoped that he would confess rather than bring about the execution of his wife. FBI agents were close by just before the executions, and they had prepared questions that were to be put to Julius Rosenberg. One of these questions, which casts doubt on the government's belief in the depth of Ethel's involvement, concerned how much Ethel Rosenberg knew. It reads, "Was your wife cognizant of your activities?"

In addition to the questions about Julius Rosenberg's guilt or innocence and about the severity of the sentence, there remains another question that may be the most interesting of all. Why did Julius Rosenberg engage in espionage? The authors do not spend a great deal of time on this subject. They do fill in some details of Julius Rosenberg's background. He came from a religious family. At an early age he developed a passion for causes and politics, and he was politically active in college, where he met Ethel. He graduated with a degree in electrical engineering. He knew little of luxury. All his life he must have lived up to his income, spending every penny he was able to earn. There is little evidence that he had time for or interest in the arts. His friends were from the same social class as he was, a middle-class group whose parents were part of an immigrant wave from Eastern Europe.

Let us compare him to another Russian spy, Anthony Blunt. The contrast is absolute. Sir Anthony Blunt, Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order, very early established a reputation through his specialist works on Nicolas Poussin and William Blake. Why is it that two people as different as Julius Rosenberg and Sir Anthony Blunt were caught up in the same net? If we could identify their motivations, would there be similarities?

Some years ago George Steiner undertook a detailed examination of Blunt's motives. Steiner intertwined Blunt's need for relief from exquisite scholarship with Blunt's homoerotic relationship with other Russian spies in the Cambridge setting. Steiner wrote that the absolute scholar, a label he applies to Blunt, is a rather uncanny being whose compulsive interest in art is an obsession more powerful than love or hatred, more tenacious than faith or friendship, and sometimes more compel-

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ling than personal life itself. Mr. Steiner's analysis is too complicated to be convincing. Perhaps what attracted them both was a belief in a system of which they knew little and which promised a coherent solution to the economic disorganization that seems to be the human condition. If Russia was the future and it worked, then all men of good faith must assist Russia in bringing about the new Jerusalem. This has religious overtones. The rich and the poor, the wise and the simple are drawn to Rome and Mecca.

There is also the point made by Dwight Macdonald:

> During the Roosevelt-Truman era, there were two kinds of liberals in America: the "practicals," who made the New Deal—politicians like Ickes, labor leaders like Reuther, college professors like Berle and Tugwell—and the "intellectuals" (the quotes are also in order here) who wrote and argued about it—Max Lerner, Freda Kirchwey, Bruce Bliven and the like. The "practicals," who in a decade wrought a social revolution which took generations in Europe, were not much affected by Communism, indeed not much interested in it; they had power, they were changing things right here, they were pragmatists rather than idealists or doctrinaires. The "intellectuals," however, were often drawn to Communism because they felt impotent and the idea of "one sixth of the globe" going their way was comforting, because they were more internationally-minded than the "practicals" and so desperately hoped in the Soviet Union as the axis of world anti-fascism, and because they needed an ideology.

There are those who served the light that failed and then turned on Communist Russia with the same energy that once they had brought to its support. This leads to another interesting speculation. What if the Rosenbergs had not been executed? What if they had been given a prison term of fourteen years, as Klaus Fuchs received? Would they have confessed? These are the times for public contrition. Blunt appeared on television in November 1980 and answered reporters' questions. Would Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, if alive today, have submitted a public confession?

We shall never know. What we do know is that the Rosenbergs remained committed zealots to the very end. Zealotry threatens constitutional government as nothing else does. The zealot despises the very laws that he exploits for his own protection. Zealotry brings to the surface reciprocal feelings of condemnation in those who believe they were placed in office to protect society. This could be the explanation of why a trained prosecutor and a sound federal judge found themselves doing things neither should have done.

Modernism in Moscow

ALL THE EMPTY PALACES. *By Beverly Whitney Kean. Barrie & Jenkins. £15.50.*

Reviewed by E. V. THAW

In recent years, because of color-plate art books and the great international loan exhibitions, nearly everyone interested in historic modern art has become aware of the extraordinary quality of the Soviet collections. But the sheer number of masterpieces currently housed in the Soviet Union still cannot have entered the consciousness of Westerners who have not themselves visited Leningrad and Moscow. The Russians possess at least twenty-five Cézannes, nearly all of them major; the majority of the masterworks from Matisse's most creative period; eighteen fine Monets; seven Douanier Rousseaus; a scattering of important van Goghs; at least twenty-four Gauguins, the bulk, perhaps, of his best work; and fifty-three Picassos, all superb examples of the blue, rose, and cubist periods, including several without which the history of art would have to be rewritten.

These holdings are owed almost entirely to the collecting careers of two Moscow merchants, S. Shchukin and I. Morozov, who, in the decade and a half preceding the First World War, purchased impressionist, post-impressionist, and modernist paintings, with understanding, sympathy, and enthusiasm, from the leading Paris dealers. In some instances, they bought directly from the artists, well in advance of the collecting taste of their generation. This was especially remarkable since Moscow was physically and culturally so dis-

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tant from the scene of those artistic developments.

How did it all happen? Who were Shchukin and Morozov? What were the results of their collecting achievements? These are the questions Beverly Whitney Kean seeks to answer in her valuable book, *All the Empty Palaces.* Readers of art books and exhibition catalogues have long known something about Shchukin and Morozov. The late Alfred Barr's monograph of Matisse, which appeared in 1951, illustrated (probably not for the first time) the interiors of Shchukin's Moscow palace, showing Matisses hanging in the great salons. There have been occasional articles about them in art magazines, but, until now, I know of no full account in English of the lives and careers of these two remarkable Russians.

Miss Kean accomplishes much more, however, than the story of the two collectors. She gives a full account of the rise of the wealthy merchant class in Russia in the nineteenth century and the simultaneous decline of the cultural hegemony of the nobility. To set the stage for the activities of two such families as the Shchukins and Morozovs (their collecting was a family affair to some extent), the author leads us through much important territory likely to be unfamiliar to English readers but nevertheless crucial to aspects of cultural history that touched the West and all of us.

We learn, among other things, about the rivalry between St. Petersburg and Moscow. Since Peter the Great's time, St. Petersburg looked to Paris and the West, and her educated classes spoke French; her art academy stressed neoclassical disciplines and subjects; her architecture was Palladian and rococo. Moscow, a growing commercial nexus, if no longer the national capital, sought a Russo-Slavic revival and was home base for the "Wanderers," a group of artists seeking emotional truth in the traditional Russian subjects of peasants, landscapes, and scenes of moral uplift. Moscow, it seems, in painting, music, theater, and architecture, remained obsessed with a concept of "old Russia" (with Ivan the Terrible serving as a kind of cult figure).

But by the end of the nineteenth century, the artistic relations between Moscow and St. Petersburg became more intertwined and complicated. Two fascinating Muscovites, Savva Mamontov and Princess Tenisheva, both sponsors of art colonies set up to revive traditional Russian crafts, became the financial backers of the young Sergei Diaghilev's St. Petersburg magazine, *Mir Iskusstva,* a review of all the arts. Mamontov, who was arrested and bankrupted in 1899, was a particularly impressive character. He launched Chaliapin's career and helped to establish the fame of Mussorgsky and Rimsky-Korsakov; but his lasting achievement, which still survives, was his conception of total theater, involving great artists in stage design and spectacle, a conception taken up later by Diaghilev and his Ballets Russes. The *Mir Iskusstva* group included the highly civilized artist Alexander Benois, and while proto-modernist in some ways, it was too conservative to recognize the total revolution in art being wrought by impressionism and post-impressionism. Of future great reputations, only Degas was adequately represented in the international art exhibition Diaghilev promoted in St. Petersburg in 1899.

After 1900, the locus of modernism shifted to Moscow. In spite of its Slavophile bias, the dominant Muscovite merchant princes were free of the polite elegance of St. Petersburg and more open to brave experimentation. They made regular visits to Paris and familiarized themselves with what was happening in the West. By 1908, five years before our Armory Show, Nikolay Ryabushinsky, editor of a Moscow magazine, could mount an exhibition with a French section of 197 paintings, including, according to Miss Kean's account, important works by Pissarro, Redon, Vuillard, Degas, van Dongen, Bonnard, Cézanne, Braque, Marquet, Gauguin, van Gogh, and Matisse. The now-famous *Night Café* by van Gogh was loaned to the exhibit by Ivan Morozov; it was later sold to Stephen C. Clark, who left it to the Yale University Art Gallery. In one of her strange and rare lapses in this book, Miss Kean fails to tell us how that happened.

Miss Kean does, however, tell us a great deal about the business and family histories of the Morozovs and the Shchukins, their connections with Mamontov, with the family of the czar's physician, Dr. Yevgeny Botkin, who possessed a legendary collection of rare objects and old masters, and finally, in Paris, with the siblings Stein, Gertrude and Leo, whose collecting careers overlapped and intertwined with those of the two Russians.

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Mikhail Morozov, Ivan's older brother, died as early as 1904 possessing French Barbizon paintings as well as some Degas, Toulouse-Lautrecs, two Tahitian Gauguins, a Bonnard, a Monet, a van Gogh, and a Manet. Arseny, Ivan's younger brother, will live in art history as Ambroise Vollard's ultimate anecdotal example of Russian morbidity. According to the account in Vollard's memoirs, Arseny, upon meeting Vollard in Ivan's house, suddenly remarked, "Tien, si je me tuais!" He then put a revolver to his head and pulled the trigger. In the case of Shchukin, himself a remarkably steady man of great intelligence, kindness, and sensitivity, the sense of doom that seemed to hang over Russians—the tendency to extremes and excess in all things—led to the suicide by drowning of his seventeen-year-old son and namesake, Sergey.

Shchukin and his good friend Morozov were not rivals. Each encouraged the other; they often went together on forays to the Paris dealers. If a judgment is necessary, Shchukin emerges on balance as the greater collector and in some ways a truly great man. Not only was his eye nearly unerring in a difficult and revolutionary period of art, but his delight at sharing his audacious choices with the artists and intellectuals of Moscow, opening his house to the public in the face of howling criticism, changed the course of art history in a significant way. As Miss Kean's book reveals, the avant-garde younger generation in prerevolutionary Russia, hungry for ideas and breakthroughs, found manna in the color and abstract synthesis of the great Matisses and the breakup of forms in the cubist Picassos.

For a time in Moscow the artistic scene became frantic with manifestos and "isms," one succeeding another almost daily. Malevich, Chagall, Goncharova, Larionov, Tatlin, El Lissitzky—these were but a few of the actors in the futurist-modernist, political-artistic dramas that raged in Russia until well after the revolution.

The triumph of the Bolsheviks, after the false security of the Kerensky government, was a shock to the merchant tycoons. Both Morozov and Shchukin survived briefly under the Communists as curator-guides to their own collections, which were nationalized as the Museum of Western Art, parts I and II, but they soon left Russia. Morozov, bitter and disillusioned, died shortly afterward. But Shchukin lived on until 1936 as a comfortable and dignified expatriate in the Paris he loved, though he was no longer financially able to collect great art.

Beverly Kean tells most of this story with style and vigor, but good as her book is, one feels it should have been still better. One wishes throughout for a good editor who could have easily avoided some of the book's annoying clumsiness. The Russian custom of referring to a person by his first name plus his father's name (i.e., Ivan Abramovich), the well-known Russian patronymic, is understood by English readers, but the device must be carefully controlled so that a reader does not lose track of who is who, as one sometimes does in these pages. It must never be used for variety alone, as Miss Kean seems to have used it. Good editing, too, would have prevented the appearance of a nonword like *hedonic* to describe Morozov's apparently hedonistic taste.

While Miss Kean is clearly not a trained art historian and many of her "facts" are suspicious (did Morozov own thirteen Cezannes by 1914 or seventeen, as the present curator of the Hermitage Museum states, and what was the location of the Bernheim-Jeune Gallery at that time?), she does solve at least one minor art history puzzle. Once and for all she clears up a question about the dates for the commission and delivery of Matisse's great decorations for Shchukin's house, *La Danse* and *La Musique*, caused by a confusion over a pair of letters, their pages having been scrambled in photocopies and then cited by Barr.

That the author is not a professional scholar is probably all to the good since she takes a wider, more panoramic view of her subject than a traditionally trained art historian might have done. But history nevertheless must be served, and grateful as I am for so much information about a cultural epoch I know little about, I find it distressing that the critical apparatus included to support the author's story is so weak. While there are footnotes, many of them merely add information to the text without giving a source. From where does all the information about these important lives derive? The author's citations do not really tell. Such a book should enable the serious reader to go further into the subject, but this one does not. An appendix lists Shchukin's entire collection. Why not Morozov's (exclud-

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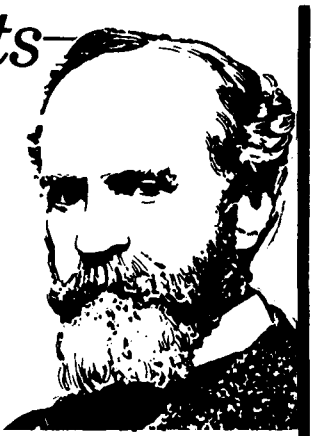
—Summer Highlights—



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ing, of course, his more than four hundred Russian paintings)? Why, also, was it not considered worth recording that Morozov had been made a chevalier of the Legion of Honor by France before World War I?

It is apparent that each chapter of *All the Empty Palaces* was written separately and much overlapping of information remains. This, too, is an editing problem that leads, unfortunately, to chronological confusion for the reader. One is constantly being thrust backward or forward a few years or a decade, with the consequence that it is often difficult to see cause and effect as the author would like us to. Yet these cavils are finally minor. Beverly Whitney Kean has provided a valuable account of a major episode in cultural history and written it with real understanding of the play of ideas in human affairs.

For Man Made

MAN AND THE NATURAL WORLD: A HISTORY OF THE MODERN SENSIBILITY. *By Keith Thomas. Pantheon. $19.95.*

Reviewed by JOHN P. SISK

Keith Thomas's new book is an expanded version of the George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures that he, a fellow and tutor at Oxford, delivered at Cambridge in 1979. It is concerned with "the profound shift in sensibilities . . . which occurred in England between the sixteenth and late eighteenth centuries" as a consequence of "the assumptions, some barely articulated, which underlay the perceptions, reasonings and feelings of inhabitants of early modern England toward the animals, birds, vegetation and physical landscape amongst which they lived their lives, often in conditions of proximity which are now difficult for us to appreciate." Its three hundred pages of text are supported by one hundred pages of citations and twenty pages of index. It is as encyclopedic in the command of its subject as is that other fine and not unrelated product of Oxford scholarship, Christopher Hill's *The World Turned Upside Down*. It is also a very timely book, even though it does not take us beyond the onset of romanticism; for, by 1800, developing relations with the natural world had brought into full view the contradictions and dilemmas that are now part of the texture of our lives.

The theme of *Man and the Natural World* is the gradual emergence of a nonutilitarian attitude. In the early modern period there was little doubt that the natural world was designed by God to serve human need. Beasts, even though they had neither soul nor reason, were not to be treated cruelly; nevertheless, their ordained place in the hierarchy of being disqualified them for the kind of creaturely sympathy that in time, as humans began to think less grandly of themselves, would come to seem natural. The Cartesians, believing that animals were machines that could not feel pain, only made the gap between man and beast wider—and at the same time gave comfort to many who found it convenient to extend the beast metaphor to primitives, slaves, the poor, the ignorant, and the mad, as well as to the Irish and women (it was possible to find authorities to support the belief that the former had tails and the latter were without souls). Until well into the eighteenth century, Thomas writes, the suffering inflicted on the subhuman orders could even be given an optimistic reading: "Birds and beasts find their fulfillment in yielding themselves up to be eaten by man." Literary people may recognize this convenient doctrine as a version of what Basil Willey in *The Eighteenth Century Background* calls "cosmic toryism," which goes still further in its utilitarianism by justifying the sufferings of humans as fulfilling the needs of a still higher order of being.

When the natural admiration for the ways and character of animals, which the late George Boas called "theriophily," was combined with the belief that every animal, no matter how ferocious or repugnant, is intended to serve some human purpose, the consequences were bound to be moralistic. Preachers believed that animals had been created for purposes of instruction. Hence, birds, bees, ants, badgers, and titmice could teach valuable moral lessons, including the bourgeois virtues of hard work, diligence, frugality, maternal affection, filial piety, mari-

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tal fidelity, and cooperation. The demonstrated moral could even stand in the way of reform: cockfighting, for instance, was valued because of the invincible courage and resolution displayed by the cock. Conversely, hogs, goats, dogs, monkeys, and flies could, when they were free from other metaphoric assignments, stand for lasciviousness and sexual infidelity. And if the animal itself taught no particular lesson, it might still be the occasion of morally useful acts; thus horseflies were created, the Virginian William Byrd thought, so that "men should exercize their wits and industry to guard themselves against them," while the louse provided a powerful incentive to keep clean. The latter creature could also, when Robert Burns saw one on a fine lady's bonnet in church, inspire a poem on the vanity of proud array.

An anthropocentric utilitarianism took (as it still does in the animated cartoon) anthropomorphic forms. This reading of the natural world in terms of its human analogies (a practice which, Francis Bacon says in *Novum Organum,* gets us into no end of trouble) made it easy "to discover in the animal world a mirror image of human social and political organization." Rooks had a parliament, storks favored republicanism, African baboons were thought to live in a kind of commonwealth, the beehive had a monarchical structure. In the vegetable kingdom, which had "tribes" and "nations," there were "patrician" lilies, "plebian" grasses, and "vagabond" fungi. This was both a convenience for classification and a way to use nature to support existing establishments. Such a way of thinking, of course, gave dignity to the natural world, but it was also a way of ignoring the intrinsic qualities of animals and plants. The new scientific mode of perception that began to emerge in the eighteenth century, Thomas writes, "was totally hostile to symbolic thinking." As we know, however, the new mode of thinking did not sweep all before it; Wordsworth and Coleridge resisted it, in somewhat new terms, as vigorously in England as Emerson and Thoreau did in America.

Theriophily may begin in the barnyard and pasture, but education, urban development, and affluence combined to shade it into a pastoral vision, that town dweller's vision of simplicity which, in England as elsewhere, depended on a good deal of ignorance about rural life. English pastoral involved, besides a cult of flowers, trees, and formal or informal gardens, a good deal of agonizing about pollution, the cutting back of forest land, and the value of the civilized and the nurtured vis-à-vis the primitive and uncultivated. Nevertheless, as Thomas points out, it was the well-to-do townsman, "inclined to think of animals as pets rather than working livestock," who was likely to support reform movements for the abolition of such cruel sports as stag and fox hunting, which were traditionally sacred to the gentry.

Indeed, pastoralism had a tendency to undermine the traditional anthropocentric utilitarianism and to encourage the belief that wild creatures, and wilderness itself, should be preserved irrespective of any human use (though one might note that, especially in America, this belief is really a higher form of utilitarianism: we *need* the vision of the "useless" natural world in order to be more fully human). Such a departure from orthodoxy could also result in the conviction, encouraged by the seventeenth-century *libertins,* that men were morally no better than animals and might even be worse. In fact, there were many who believed then, as some animal lovers still do, that animals are more virtuous than humans, and especially more peace loving.

One need not believe this to agree that the new sensibility inevitably poses the questions Thomas ends with: Town or Country? Cultivation or Wilderness? Conquest or Conservation? Meat or Mercy? These questions come up early in the period covered, but with the breakdown of anthropocentric utilitarianism they become more urgent. The belief that it is morally wrong, physically unhealthy, or spiritually impoverishing to eat animals, for instance, goes back to pagan times and is repeated by some theologians and clergymen in early modern England and by seventeenth-century Protestant radicals like Giles Randall, Roger Crab, Thomas Edwards, and Jacob Bauthumley, who populate Christopher Hill's *The World Turned Upside Down.* By the end of the eighteenth century, vegetarianism was the only answer for an increasing number of people. For some, as for Shelley, it was an answer with utopian possibilities: the new diet would eliminate barbarousness and bellicosity from human nature, and we would,

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presumably, be back in something like Milton's vegetarian Paradise, where before the Fall even the animals did not eat one another.

Man and the Natural World is in all respects a beautiful book. Gracefully written and tastefully illustrated, it organizes a complex subject clearly and without oversimplification. It will make sense to Americans even though, given the scale of the nature we have had to relate to and the different social and political context, the new sensibility has developed here at a different pace.

Early Bertie

THE COLLECTED PAPERS OF BERTRAND RUSSELL. Volume I: CAMBRIDGE ESSAYS, 1888–99. *Edited by Kenneth Blackwell, Andrew Brink, Nicholas Griffin, Richard A. Rempel, John G. Slater. Allen & Unwin. $70.*

Reviewed by CHARLES H. KARELIS and ROBERT H. BELL

Volume I of McMaster University's massive *Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell* is entitled *Cambridge Essays, 1888–99*. The forty-nine papers and autobiographical documents included in the volume allow one to follow Russell's personal and philosophical development from the period of his preparation for the Trinity College, Cambridge, scholarship examination, through the completion of his undergraduate course in mathematics and his graduate study of philosophy, to his first ventures into teaching and print. This lavishly annotated collection provides numerous pleasures both for scholars and for general readers interested in one of the most creative, lucid, and provocative minds of our century.

The editors have divided the essays into seven categories, of which the most interesting, from the standpoint of Russell's philosophical development, are the essays Russell read to what has been called the world's best-known secret society, the Apostles; those he presented as a graduate student to his teachers of epistemology and history of philosophy, James Ward and G. F. Stout; and those that he wrote in the same period for his teacher of ethics, Henry Sidgwick, the great utilitarian.

Having grown up in the hothouse of his widowed grandmother's establishment in Richmond Park, Russell was naturally an early bloomer, and virtually all of the essays are smart, opinionated, and elegant in the way that one associates with his maturity. Indeed the historical papers are really much better, from the standpoint of anyone seeking concise and thorough summaries of the figures covered, than Russell's treatments of these figures in his much later *History of Western Philosophy*. Taken together, the essays also give ample evidence of another quality that marked Bertrand Russell's later philosophical development, and indeed his personal life—fickleness.

The youthful change of heart that Russell was later to dwell most upon was his repudiation of the anglicized Hegelianism that dominated British philosophy at the end of the century. This school held that the apparent separateness of finite minds from each other and from the objective world was an illusion—to be dissipated by what it called "that unusually obstinate attempt to think clearly"—otherwise known as metaphysics. The present volume lets us watch this apostasy happen, and indeed it makes the change seem rather more sudden than Russell's *Autobiography* or Ronald W. Clark's biography reports it as having been. Thus we find the young Russell sermonizing in the summer of 1895 that "since freedom consists of the absence of external compulsion, it is clear that the Universe, as the sum of all that is, must be free," and that therefore every finite "participator in the nature of the whole" must likewise participate in its freedom. But as early as the beginning of 1897, he is calling the doctrine of submission to the universal will "a very pious doctrine, which I should like extremely to believe"; and by the end of that year, in his essay "Seems, Madam? Nay, it is," he is in open revolt.

But less famous about-faces practically crowd this one from the pages of the volume. Thus in 1893 Russell writes for Stout a strong defense of Kant's claim that space as we experience it must necessarily be Euclidean, arguing that the subsequently discovered "non-Euclidean geometries" are wholly for-

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mal constructions that qualify as geometries only by courtesy. But by the time he writes "The A Priori in Geometry" in 1896, Russell has decided that several Euclidean axioms, including the thesis that space is three-dimensional, "are not essential to the possibility of a geometry" and "must be derived from more special experience." Or again, on the question of the definability of values in terms of facts, he writes for Sidgwick in 1893 that "there seems to be no relation whatever between what ought to be and what is, has been, or will be," and for the Apostles four years later, he writes that the valuable can be nothing else than the desired, contrary to the insistence of "our brother Moore" that goodness is a non-natural quality.

This latter essay, entitled "Is Ethics a Branch of Empirical Psychology?" in fact casts an ironic light on Russell's notorious emotional turnabouts. In the essay, he recognizes that, by equating something's being good with its being desired, he seems to rule out the very possibility of bad intentional behavior. But on the contrary, he contends, the equation does make room for bad intentional behavior, since the desires from which we act may *themselves* not be such as we desire to have. At this point Russell should have recognized that the original problem of his equation resurfaces as the question of why an ethical theory is entitled to rule out the very possibility of subjecting to moral scrutiny a person's acceptance of his own desires. But he does not acknowledge this problem. He simply concludes that "the man who desires always and only what he wishes to desire, is perfectly good in his conduct." Still, with even this much theoretical insight into the problem of desires for desires, it is surprising that Russell could have accepted, with nary a compunction, the sudden realization, in the midst of a famous bicycle ride in 1901, that he no longer loved his wife.

Russell's very first essay for Sidgwick's ethics course, written in 1893, contains a plausible and original idea that merits special attention. This idea has the important consequence that the practical meaning of the utilitarian philosophy is not at all what utilitarians down to the present day have supposed. At least since the time of Bentham, it has been a commonplace of political economists that marginal units of a good bring increasing quantities of pleasure or "utility" to an individual at an ever-decreasing rate. This psychological thesis of diminishing marginal utility has always been the cornerstone of the utilitarian argument for equal distribution of goods: any movement away from equality will increase the utility of the gainer by less than it will lower the utility of the loser, and will thus reduce the aggregate satisfaction produced by the goods in question.

Russell challenges the psychological thesis in two ways. First, he claims that sources of intellectual, as distinct from physical, pleasure obey a law of *increasing* marginal return. This is evident, he says, in the fact that mathematicians "become notoriously so wrapt up in their intellectual pleasures as to be almost unconscious of external events." Sidgwick wrote "I doubt this" in the margin next to Russell's claim, and it is impossible not to take Russell's own abandonment of mathematical logic after the teens as tending to support Sidgwick's reservations: the marginal utility of almost anything diminishes eventually.

But Russell's second challenge to the law of diminishing marginal utility is persuasive: "mental pain as well as physical loses its edge by long continuance: a certain energy seems essential to the possibility of intense pain as of intense pleasure, and this energy is in time destroyed by the very pain which requires it." Moreover, he adds, custom inures one to the sources of mental pain. Once again Sidgwick dissented in the margin of Russell's essay. Yet surely there is much to be said for the idea that the marginal *disutility* of *burdensome* things diminishes no less than the marginal *utility* of *pleasant* ones. If enough is as good as a feast, as the proverbial hyperbole would have it, so also is not quite enough as bad as a famine.

But if this is so, then the utilitarian rule of maximizing aggregate happiness must mean that, in situations of scarcity, one's duty is to distribute what goods there are unequally, rather than equally. Spreading the burdensome deprivations around, in other words, will only increase the aggregate of pain they cause above the level they would generate if concentrated on a few unfortunates. Russell evidently did not notice this consequence of his challenge to the thesis of diminishing marginal utility, for when he raised some

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objections to the standard utilitarian argument for equality in his 1896 essay, "The Uses of Luxury," he did not mention it. But the long-standing claim of utilitarianism to capture the moral intuitions of the ordinary person is obviously jeopardized by the fact that, if Russell's challenge is correct, the utilitarian philosophy will deliver radically inegalitarian prescriptions in certain circumstances.

In the personal writings presented here, one discovers some of the themes and conflicts that concerned Russell all his long life (he died in 1970 at age ninety-eight). A "Self-Appreciation" of 1897 includes this unsparing self-evaluation: "My faults are a tendency to nagging and to overestimating my own importance so that what thwarts my pursuits seems wicked . . . . Also dogmatism." At age fifteen, the young skeptic, barred from expressing his attitudes in Granny's rigid Victorian home, surreptitiously records the struggle between his logic and his faith. His convictions demolished, he painfully considers the implications of his conclusions: "On the whole I am inclined to continue to pursue truth, though truth of the kind in this book (if that indeed be truth) I have no desire to spread, but rather to prevent from spreading." This adolescent journal contains "morose cogitations" and the first of many references to suicide.

Russell's editors rightly call Russell a Victorian Sage in the tradition of Carlyle, Arnold, and Ruskin. What makes so much of Russell's work enduring is the clarity and vigor of his vatic voice and the dramatic encounter between this voice of the Victorian Sage and that of the Reluctant Modern. All his life, the values he wished to affirm—religious, metaphysical, Romantic—gave way to compunctions he could not quell. Russell, the Western world's most prominent skeptic since Voltaire, longed profoundly for what his mind repudiated; has any other modern philosopher used the word "soul" so often and so ardently as he? "For those who have the metaphysical passion, there is probably no emotion so rich and beautiful, so wholly desirable, as that mystic sense which philosophy sometimes gives of a world transformed by the beatific." Russell shared this mystic sense but refused to cede it "the power of giving comfort and consolation."

For Russell, as an individual and as a systematic thinker, the center cannot hold. Ultimately, it is the rigor of his intellectual honesty, not the coherence or consistency of his ideas, that compels respect. He is never afraid to draw attention to the limits, even the contradictions, of his argument. Entirely in character is the conclusion to one of his essays for the Apostles: "I suppose there ought to be some criterion for deciding the relative value of the different methods; but I am unable to see what they are: perhaps this point too may be elucidated by discussion."

A prominent element in Russell's writing, as in his whole life, is the dichotomy between mind and heart, abstraction and passion. What is remarkable is not that he is either too emotional or too abstruse, but that he is sometimes capable of speaking about passion with marvelous urgency and precision. His love letters, when fully published, will show Russell to be one of the great epistolary masters. The blend is not always so felicitous. A piece called "Die Ehe" (1893) is a kind of philosopher's persuasion poem seeking to convince a reluctant Alys Smith, his first wife, on such amusing polemical grounds as the likely "social qualities" (for example, progressive beliefs) of their offspring. One argument set forth here was later abandoned: "For any man or woman engaged in any sort of philanthropic or public work it is of course out of the question to indulge, at least openly, in extra-connubial sexual intercourse. . . ." His "Self-Appreciation" mixed Wildean panache with such salient distinctions as, "Psychologically, sin has a meaning to me, and I love to see sinners punished. Logically I can find no meaning for the word Sin."

One of his Apostolic essays addresses the question, "What shall we do with our passions?" and the answer is invariably to express and dissect them. Another paper, ostensibly considering the admission of women to the Apostles, becomes a wry, sometimes hilarious, investigation of desire and ratiocination.

> Women normally derive their intellectual from their personal interests: they are usually not interested in any question of theory until it has somehow connected itself with their personal affections. . . . Of course before electing any women some member would have to promise that she was perfectly ready to discuss unnatural vice . . . in a perfectly unartificial manner, without the feeling of doing anything unusual or perhaps a little naughty. . . . [A]mong

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women whose intellectual interests are keen there are many who regard love merely as a nuisance, like an attack of measles. . . . [W]e sometimes discuss definitely sexual subjects, and the inadequacy of discussions by one sex alone thus becomes glaring: when we divided last term on "Can we love those we copulate with?" the presence of women would have been invaluable.

Another tension evident in these early writings is the conflict between confession and concealment. At fifteen Russell is probing his feelings and convictions with the scrupulosity of a seventeenth-century Puritan divine, yet he encodes his "cogitations" in Greek letters, lest he shock his "people." Published here for the first time is "a locked diary" of occasional entries between 1890 and 1894 "very carefully concealed from everyone." Like so many autobiographical excursions, the diary was motivated by romantic ardor, confining circumstances, and the habit, acquired very young, of self-analysis. Like many of Russell's later personal narratives, this diary was a means of evading one woman and approaching another; hidden from Granny, it was shared with Alys.

As a journalist Russell reveals talent but not genius for self-dramatization and self-appraisal. At eighteen he hopes to become "less introspective, less shy, more genial, less cynical, more firm and steadfast of purpose" but fears that he will become "more conceited, more argumentative, more conventional, that I shall lose whatever poetic feeling I may have had." He regrets the "unwholesome atmosphere" of his mind. He records such mundane events as visits and tennis at Pembroke Lodge, criticizes the minister's sermons, laments his selfishness and loss of faith, although he continues ardently to implore his Lord.

By far the most arresting entries in the diary depict his courtship of Alys. It begins with a dream that he is engaged but must break off because his mother is not dead but in a madhouse (his grandmother tried to dissuade him from marriage by citing lunacy in the family). Unpersuaded, the young suitor takes comfort in his honorable intentions: "I know Lust has absolutely no share in my passion." The account of their courting—colloquies, really—leading to an eventual understanding are touching, amusing, fascinating. Most striking of all is Russell's dread of insanity, "the perpetual gloom which hangs like a fate" over him, and of loss. As a small child he had lost a sister and both parents within two years, and this trauma has a great deal to do with his vexed, often strident relationships with women. At a bizarrely incongruous time, betrothed to Alys, the world all before him, he meditates thus: "I feel as though darkness were my native element, and a cruel destiny has compelled me, instead of myself attaining to the light, to drag her back with me into the gulf from which I have partially emerged. I cannot tell whether this destiny will take the form of a sudden blow, or of a long-drawn torture, sapping our energies and ruining our love; but I am haunted by the fear of the family ghost, which seems to seize on me with clammy invisible hands to avenge my desertion of its tradition of gloom."

If this lugubrious meditation were incidental, we could attribute it to Russell's painful struggle with his family for independence and his understandable fear of hereditary insanity. But the images recur throughout his life: darkness, gulfs, ghosts, specters, suicide. Like young Romeo, young Russell finds ill omens before there is any evidence of disaster. Perhaps more frightening is the vision of his destiny with Alys as "a long-drawn torture, sapping our energies and ruining our love." This is prescient, as is much else in this the first volume of Russell's *Collected Papers*, which will be published in twenty-eight volumes over the next twenty years. A most significant intellectual enterprise is off to a most impressive beginning.

Wilson in Dishabille

THE FORTIES. *By Edmund Wilson, edited, with an introduction, by Leon Edel. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. $17.95.*

Reviewed by JANET GROTH

Edmund Wilson, in his notebooks of the forties writes: "The writer, when he ages, is in a better situation than the practitioner of some kind of work which requires more physical exertion: he has only to sit and write, and he

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finds that he knows his business better and is in full command of his forces—I have been feeling something of this as I have been coming closer to fifty."

Wilson's feeling seems fully justified, even if one only considers that during the forties he wrote *The Wound and the Bow*—a collection of essays brilliantly tracing the psychological sources of art in such diverse figures as Dickens, Kipling, Joyce, and Hemingway. But two collections of Wilson's travel writings were also published during the forties: one, *Europe Without Baedecker*, chronicles the various kinds of devastation he witnessed in England and on the Continent after World War II, and the other, *Red, Black, Blond and Olive*, reports on his travels to New Mexico and to the new republic of Haiti. Published in the forties, too, was *Classics and Commercials*, a collection of Wilson's pieces ranging from a review of Dover Wilson's book on Falstaff to a consideration of Jean-Paul Sartre, both as novelist and philosopher.

Wilson's sense of command over his literary—and, certainly, his economic—powers was no doubt assisted in this period by his having been offered, in 1943, the position of book critic and general contributor to the *New Yorker*, a position he was to hold for the rest of his life.

Yet the notebooks and diaries themselves give surprisingly little evidence of Edmund Wilson's power. Even though Leon Edel has once again, as in *The Twenties* and *The Thirties*, functioned ably as Wilson's handpicked literary editor and has provided graceful biographical bridges, headnotes, and other commentary, he has been unable to conceal the rawness of these papers of the forties (which, unlike the others, Wilson did not live to work on before publication). The result is that, to an even more marked degree than in the earlier volumes, these pages bear witness to a pronounced, almost shocking, repression of emotion in their author. What we have here are personal writings largely lacking in the personal feeling one expects to find in the diaries of even a very private man.

In *The Forties* Wilson comes across as clumsy, wooden, cold, and, above all, evasive. What unconscious pressures overrode his literary acumen to lead him to record in his diaries page after page of irrelevancies—details of landscape and weather; earnest but not

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very interesting descriptions of various persons, places, and things; and conversations with people he seems to care nothing about? (An exception is the visit he reports on having paid Edna St. Vincent Millay late in her life, but even this is more fully and more warmly recorded in an essay on Millay in *The Shores of Light*.)

Some clue as to the nature of these unconscious pressures comes to us through Wilson's notes for an unfinished novel, which Edel has included in this volume. Describing a man in a difficult situation, obliged to go to an encounter with an ex-wife—a confrontation he dreads and in which he feels himself at a disadvantage—Wilson writes:

> His reluctance to make the trip is so great that he can hardly bring himself to take the train. He broods, staring out the window.... He fixes his attention on passing objects to the exclusion of what is most on his mind, as one does on the way to an operation.

For Wilson, if not for his fictional hero, there are signs in these pages that he blocks not only painful emotions by fixing "his attention on passing objects" but positive ones as well. One of the few references to his life with Mary McCarthy, his third wife, is in an entry from May 21, 1941. The occasion is a family picnic in the woods, and Wilson begins by going into sensual detail over the configuration and softness to be found in lady's slippers and baby pinecones. He goes on to describe with appreciation the light and shade dappling Mary's white skin. He thinks she is looking "very pretty." But then he breaks off abruptly and begins exploring and describing "the other bank of the pond"; he contrasts the look of the water in two different kinds of weather and two different times of day. The entry returns to the attraction Wilson has felt for his wife only indirectly: "When I went back to get the towels, on which Mary had been lying, I saw a little orange-and-black bird, like a finch, hopping around in those scrub pines just where we had been."

It is evidently emotion itself that scares Wilson into nature study. That is a poignant enough situation, far from uncommon, even among writers who by definition are supposed to be plumbers of human sensitivity. But there is reason for a more selfish regret in Wilson's case, since an early and tantalizing entry or two shows us what we might have had so much more of, but for this affliction. There is, for example, a sense of some fugitive feeling, captured on the wing, in another glimpse we get of Edmund and Mary Wilson as together they watch a full moon, shining through inky clouds into the upper-story window of a friend's house. Wilson notes: "Mary said she always thought it was moving—I always thought it was standing still."

More touching still is the following entry, dated April 1940:

> Here at the top of the house I lie alone—glad to hear only the wind in the window frame—or silence, silence—of the dullness of neighbors who do not know one another—of friends who have slid away down the other side of the mountain, while still, if a little estranged, we seemed within calling distance—of death, of a person who never again can reach one, that one never again can reach—you cannot hear her voice because it is no longer there—she is not somewhere far away now, even sitting alone, writing you a letter—she is no part of this house, of these houses, of any houses of people—she cannot make, cannot hear, a sound—all around there is nothing and I lie alone with silence sloping on every side, slipping (sliding) away to nothing, and I, as it were, content. If I cannot hear or hold that person, I would rather have silence alone.

An unfortunate concomitant of Wilson's reticence about his intimate feelings, especially about women, is his habit—which may, indeed, be a compensatory one—of being all too explicit about his intimate relations with them. This aspect of the notebooks is not really surprising in a writer who, within the same decade, wrote and published *Memoirs of Hecate County*, a work of fiction censored at the time for its sexual frankness and is even now remarkable for its depicting of copulation in such chillingly clinical terms that not only the characters engaging in it but the act itself is made to seem nothing so much as repugnant.

Does *The Forties* consist, then, only of digressions that seem to be occasioned by Wilson's emotional blocks, composed on the one hand of evasive excursions into nature, meteorology, and unentertaining social notes from Provincetown and Rome, and on the other of accounts of Wilson's sexual exploits—many of which, involving Elena, his fourth and last wife, are in the most doubtful taste?

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Not quite, but the reader who wishes to know more about Wilson's life during this decade will have to look elsewhere. The story of his friendship with Vladimir Nabokov, for example, is not to be found in these pages, but rather in Simon Karlinsky's edition of *The Nabokov-Wilson Letters* (1979). And, although the notebooks do refer to his friendship with John Dos Passos (the tragic death of whose wife, Katy, is the subject of a strangely strangled entry), this and other of his literary friendships receive much fuller treatment in the selected edition of his *Letters on Literature and Politics* (1977), edited by Elena Wilson.

Unfortunately, the material that is included in the present volume to fill out its meagerness (Edel candidly refers to the 1940–45 entries as "the scrappiest" of all Wilson's journal keeping) is very scrappy indeed. The additions have little or no intrinsic interest, and in many instances, they must be looked upon as useful only to scholarly readers who find it rewarding to compare early versions of expository prose with the finished product found in books Wilson later published.

Here, with no relation to their surrounding entries, are the notes Wilson took for *Europe Without Baedecker* and for the Zuni and Haiti portions of *Red, Black, Blond and Olive*. The latter are merely redundant, but the European notes vex us by their coldness and thinness and by their occasional bursts of chauvinistic excess:

> What is Naples but a few antiquities . . . and a groveling population that ought to be prevented from breeding in filth.—I have had moments when I have felt, let the Americans take it over and make it into something which will be better if it is only as good as Stamford, Conn.!

Nothing this crude remains in *Europe Without Baedecker;* whether we have gained something of value by discovering it in the author's private papers of *The Forties* belongs to that realm of argument whereby we justify all thorough scholarship—it is part of the complete picture; therefore it belongs as part of the investigation of anyone who would have the complete picture.

Let no one suppose, however, that the picture of Edmund Wilson to be found in these pages is anything but the picture of a fastidious writer caught in a state of decided disharbille. Those in search of Edmund Wilson, the writer so often described as "America's most distinguished man of letters," are better advised to seek him out in his full-dress literary performances, many of which are to be found, in generously excerpted form, in the recently published Penguin Books addition to the Viking series, *The Portable Edmund Wilson*, edited by Lewis M. Dabney.

War and the Private Calendar

FRENCH AND GERMANS, GERMANS AND FRENCH: A PERSONAL INTERPRETATION OF FRANCE UNDER TWO OCCUPATIONS, 1914–1918, 1940–1944. *By Richard Cobb. University Press of New England. $15.95.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL BURNS

The images are frightening and familiar: World War I propaganda prints of German hordes sweeping toward France, raping nuns, and bayoneting Belgian infants; Parisian taxis rushing troops northeast to the Battle of the Marne; lush forests along a strip of European landscape running from the North Sea to the Swiss border turned into an arid moonscape by countless bombs; picture postcards sent by barely literate trench soldiers to mothers and sweethearts in Brittany or Provence. Then another war and occupation with even more familiar images (thanks to, among other things, more cameras): Hitler posed like any tourist on the terrace of the Palais de Chaillot, the Eiffel Tower rising in the background; luxury hotels—the Meurice, Prince de Galles, Continental—draped with swastikas and requisitioned by a new elite; uniformed sightseers visiting the Tuileries by day, ogling gartered thighs at the Moulin Rouge by night. And the most familiar image of all: the Champs-Elysées, from the Arc de Triomphe to the Place de la Concorde, a majestic view sullied by memories of German troops goosestepping past the vanquished French. Some Parisians turn their backs in defiance, others

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look on stunned or weeping, still others seem quietly relieved that, after years of political chaos and violent conflict at home, a resolution is at hand.

Snapshots, postcards, newsreels, and films (Jean Renoir's *Grand Illusion* for the First World War, Max Ophuls's documentary *The Sorrow and the Pity* for the Second)—along with the occasional memoir or novel—provide impressionistic insights into the everyday lives of soldiers and civilians in occupied France. Meanwhile, more scholarly accounts, at least of the first occupation, have yet to be written. Nearly two decades ago, Gabriel Perreux's *La Vie quotidienne des civils en France pendant la Grande Guerre* presented a brief survey of life on the home front, but, unhappily, Perreux has attracted few followers. The second occupation has been better served by such historians as Henri Amouroux, Robert Aron, Henri Michel, David Pryce-Jones, and, most recently, Michael Marrus and Robert Paxton. However, with only a few exceptions, these accounts focus on public life—administration, institutions, collectivities—rather than on the daily lives of individual *occupants* and *occupés*, their compassion, nastiness, cowardice, and quiet courage.

This is Richard Cobb territory. In his many works on the French Revolution and its aftermath, Cobb has shown his preference for the individual over the collective, for the marginal, often eccentric, historical actor. *Reactions to the French Revolution, Paris and Its Provinces, The Police and the People*, among others, move beyond what Cobb calls the "public calendar" (the Bastille, the Terror, Thermidor, Brumaire) to the "private calendar" of the commonplace, or, in the jargon of *Annales*, the structure of everyday life. We learn how people ate, drank, worked, played, hated, loved (and made love), and how their unfamiliar lives shaped, and were shaped by, familiar revolutionary events. A chronicler of human survival, Cobb is also a *flaneur* from afar, a roving detective like his fictional hero Maigret, who rejects trendy methodologies for old-time intuition. Sifting the evidence carefully, expertly, he reconstructs—again like Simenon's police commissioner—the private lives of victims and victimizers.

The historical period covered in *French and Germans, Germans and French* is a departure for Cobb; the human problems are not. In this highly personal "essay in interpretation and imagination," he returns to the private calendar, taking us behind the scenes, away from the military headquarters on the Western Front or the political debates at Vichy, to the back streets and bedrooms, where soldiers and civilians fight private battles or strike a private peace, where war is domesticated and the "triumph of civilian priorities and virtues over military ones has been asserted." Like a Renaissance artist experimenting with new themes on the predella panels of a massive triptych, Cobb explores issues rarely found in the weightier military, political, and economic histories of Europe at war.

The first and shorter section, on World War I, examines the Nord, one of twenty French *départements* that, at some point in the course of four years, came under German control. The region's geography and natural resources had long made it a target for invaders from the east; and local inhabitants, like their Alsatian counterparts, held vivid memories of the quick, humiliating defeat at the hands of the Prussians in 1870.

Cobb says little about the ways in which past conflicts shaped present attitudes. Instead, he concentrates on the immediate, quotidian problems faced by German soldiers and French civilians scrambling to survive. He touches on the "public record"—local administration, forced labor, propaganda—and suggests that Germans would arrive better prepared in 1940 thanks to lessons learned during the first occupation. But his most compelling passages describe the human effects of isolation, of being unmoored, set adrift from the rest of France. That sense of separateness increased tensions, heated up long-standing regional rivalries between the besieged north and unoccupied south, and drew *occupants* and *occupés* close together for the war's duration.

Four long years of familiarity bred many things. Culling evidence from memoirs and novels, Cobb shows how individual German soldiers and French civilians became bitter enemies, fast friends, awkward neighbors, and agile bedfellows. He follows the railroad network that crisscrossed the industrial frontier through Lille, Roubaix, and Tourcoing,

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past the windows of working-class apartments in which a French wife or mother, widowed or waiting, might spend the night (or the war) with a German soldier. We hear train wheels rumble, smell coffee on the stove, and see the soldier put his uniform aside for the night—the shiny buckle reads *Gott Mit Uns*—along with his loneliness. Far from yet another sordid story of a French *horizontale* mechanically servicing a German john (though Cobb describes them as well), this is an intimate scene in which a man and a woman try naturally to escape the unnatural state of war.

In the second part, which concerns the years from 1940 to 1944, we learn about similar intimacies, similar strategies of survival, some involving Franco-German sons or daughters produced in the private moments of the first occupation. Cobb worked as a British soldier in close contact with French, German, and Belgian civilians from 1944 to 1946, and in these chapters he includes his own personal observations on *occupants* and *occupés*. He also extends his story geographically and politically to all of France and to the very public and controversial problem of collaboration.

Traditional histories of the Second World War in France examine the organizations and political permutations of collaboration and resistance. In an attempt to define the traits of French "fascism," they also contrast the policies of Vichy with those in the occupied regions to the north, especially Paris. In this study, however, Cobb is less concerned with definitions than with descriptions. He brushes quick, at times vicious, portraits of those Paris-based followers of Déat and Doriot for whom the radical, exhilarating journey, not the arrival (or the cost), mattered; and he describes the conservatives of Vichy's National Revolution who spouted feeble platitudes about Work, Family, and Fatherland while escaping into the safe dream of a glorious rural past.

Some of the most caustic asides are reserved for the bankrupt or indifferent French intelligentsia, including Brasillach, Gide, Céline, and, above all, Drieu la Rochelle ("The only time that the sickly, effete Drieu actually went through with something . . . was when he committed suicide . . . the logical conclusion to a life of frittered futility"). Politicians fare no better: Déat is portrayed as a

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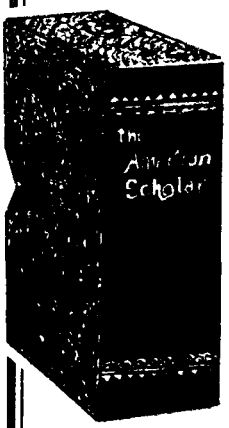

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"bizarre mixture of half-baked intellectual, of failed politician, lacking even the most elementary human touch," while Laval is the Vichy embodiment of "selfishness and cowardice." Only the octogenarian Pétain is pitied; Cobb finds it "hard to think of an old man who spoke in such genuine and clearly felt grandfatherly tones as a politician of consummate wickedness who had anesthetized and deceived his people into semi-collaboration."

As these portraits suggest, the author is continuing in the spirit of his work on the French Revolution, studying collaboration, not only regionally, but privately as well. He tells, for example, the sad story of delation, of French men and women grafting old personal feuds to the new political crisis by condemning rivals in vicious letters to German or Vichy authorities. For Cobb, these *dénonciateurs* and *dénonciatrices* make up the "bile and slime of times of disaster."

But, finally, Cobb is most at home in the gray areas of history, in that marginal world where clear definitions of heroes and villains are difficult and dangerous. He vigorously condemns proponents of "collaborationism . . . a more public and political form of collaboration," but insists that the majority of ordinary people—hotel maids, restaurant waiters, metro drivers, streetwalkers—simply tried to get on with life while surrounded by German occupiers. This, says Cobb, is an "eminently sensible aim."

Historians of everyday life will find striking similarities between the private calendars of soldiers and civilians during the time periods of 1914–1918 and 1940–1944; the means of human survival in the midst of war, any war, rarely varies. Still, Cobb reminds us that the two occupations were different. Germans used forced labor in the First World War, but did not deport significant numbers of French men and women across the border to farms or factories (or camps) as they would in the Second World War. Only northeastern France fell to the Germans between 1914 and 1918, while by late 1943 nearly the entire hexagon was under Nazi control. Also, after 1940, Germans called on the all-too-willing "alternative" French government at Vichy to do much of their dirty work, a benefit they did not enjoy during the earlier conflict (though it might be argued that the first government of the Third Republic, quaking after the Prussian defeat and ready to turn on their own people in 1871, shared some uncomfortable similarities with Vichy). Finally, Cobb maintains that the second occupation was "less vexatious in terms of humiliation, the German soldiers being rather better behaved and better disciplined than their predecessors." Unless, of course, one was a Jew. The discipline and efficiency of Germans from 1940 to 1944 only made things worse for Jews. For them, the hardships of the first occupation could not match the barbarism of the second.

This sensitive, beautifully written "personal interpretation" of the two occupations contains all that is grand and frustrating about Richard Cobb's recent work. A dogged defender of the narrative, he rejects charts, graphs, and the rest of the arsenal of the sociological historian and declares his penchant for the individual over the collective. He teases splendid stories from esoteric evidence, and with grace and imagination throws light on the shadows (and dark underbellies) of human history. His "main concern is that the present study . . . should make enjoyable reading." The promise is kept.

Yet this "tentative approach to . . . elusive problems" may disappoint as well as enchant. Too often, brilliant descriptions and suggestive insights are left unanalyzed. There is much more to know, for instance, about memories of 1870 and how they influenced civilian attitudes in the northeast in 1914; about the methods and motivations of informers during both wars; about World War I marriages between French civilians and German (or other) soldiers, and how and why those liaisons became avenues of social mobility; about German-controlled propaganda newspapers (*Gazette des Ardennes*) designed to exploit regional chauvinisms in the northeast in World War I, and what this tells us about the (dis)unity of the French. Cobb touches on these issues, engages our interest, then quickly moves on.

Saddest of all is the possibility that a historian who possesses none of Cobb's style, none of his profound knowledge of the French and their idiosyncrasies, will build on these tentative themes to write the big history of *occupants* and *occupés*—especially of the First World War—that students will read. There is a book in this book, and the best author for it is Richard Cobb.

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Music of the Gross

RED AND HOT: THE FATE OF JAZZ IN THE SOVIET UNION, 1917–1980. *By S. Frederick Starr. Oxford University Press. $16.95.*

Reviewed by PETER SCHWENDENER

The first jazz record was cut February 26, 1917, in Camden, New Jersey, by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and released March 7 of that year, five days before the Bolshevik seizure of Petrograd. From S. Frederick Starr's unusual history of jazz in the USSR we learn that as it "found its way" into the new Soviet state in the 1920s "the raucous new American music" struck certain leaders of the Revolution and their cultural hangers-on as a force that could perhaps play a part in their efforts to design a new Soviet culture "from above." Jazz dances such as the shimmy and fox-trot, at least one revolutionary felt, "translated the life of modern man into linear, mechanistic but free movement, just as the nineteenth century's unfocused yearnings coalesced in the swimming movement of the waltz." Thus was jazz promoted by Valentin Parnakh, "Russian Futurist poet, Dadaist, Surrealist, editor, dancer but non-musician," in a decidedly elitist effort to "make the common man an artist and, in the process, drive decadent classical ballet from the stage."

The Association of Proletarian Musicians, "organized in 1923 to foster ideologically committed music," licensed and policed a number of "jazz" orchestras whose music fostered little dancing, purged as it was of such manifestations of bourgeois individualism as improvisation and swing. Thus denatured, jazz was praised by Lazar Kaganovich, Stalin's "purger of the Soviet railways," as above all "the friend of the jolly, the musical organizer of our high-spirited youth."

Such were the early official benefactors of the new music called "jazz" in the USSR. On the other hand, the puritanism of the Soviet Union's cultural revolution of 1928–1931 had as one of its important expressions an essay by the novelist Maxim Gorky on "The Music of the Gross." Jazz, he observed, was the music of ruinous sensuality, Western cynicism, homosexuality, and obesity. Disturbed one night at his writing desk (as he dramatized things for the readers of *Pravda*, where the essay first appeared in 1928) by the sound of jazz from a radio in a neighboring hotel, Gorky pondered its meaning: "Listening for a few minutes to these wails, one involuntarily imagines an orchestra of sexually driven madmen conducted by a man-stallion brandishing a huge genital member."

The pleasure of reading this is tempered by Mr. Starr's reminder that in authoritarian societies the little annoyances of eminent persons are easily "translated into national policy": for squares in the Kremlin it "defined the Soviet critique of jazz," and "over the following half-century, whenever Soviet writers wished to settle scores with this threatening music or simply to contrast the Soviet Union with the degenerate West, they invoked Gorky."

How Soviet jazz and jazz musicians survived Parnakh, Kaganovich, Gorky, and "the ideology of cultural intervention" to find authentic popularity among college students, wayward party members, shirkers, and other frequenters of remote dance halls and hard-to-

PETER SCHWENDENER is a jazz pianist in Chicago and a staff writer for the weekly Chicago *Reader*.

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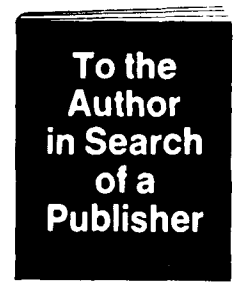

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find nightclubs is curiously related in the chapters Mr. Starr entitles "Russia's Roaring Twenties" and "The Red Jazz Age." The USSR's "rock inundation" of the past two decades is covered as well; after an initial total ban on rock in the early 1960s, Moscow's "ensuing effort at cooptation drew heavily on the government's earlier experience with modern jazz," the result being state-sponsored rock groups with such unpromising names as the Singing Guitars and the Happy Guys.

Broadly concerned as he is with what happens to a form of popular entertainment under a totalitarian government, Mr. Starr is perhaps justified in avoiding the difficult subject of the "musical identity" of jazz itself. Music critics and historians seeking its definition, he feels, have too often "concentrated on such [purely] musical traits as syncopation, improvisation, and the use of 'blue' notes. As the list is extended, and as the discussion plunges deeper and deeper into the arcana of polyphony and contrapuntal rhythmic formations, the essence of the music is easily lost from view. To performers and audiences alike, the glory or baseness of jazz at its inception was its raucousness and utter indifference to the niceties of nineteenth-century musical etiquette."

How jazz succeeded in adding certain undeniably new "musical traits" to those it borrowed from African, European classical, and earlier American popular music is a subject worth more careful consideration than Mr. Starr allows. Yet as far as it goes, this view of the essence of jazz was indeed that put forth by its first listeners, among them F. Scott Fitzgerald, quoted in this book on America's jazz age: "The word 'jazz,' in its progress toward respectability, has meant first sex, then dancing, then music. It is associated with a state of nervous stimulation, not unlike that of big cities behind the lines of war." In Russia, as Mr. Starr's book suggests, the Communist and popular responses to jazz have been similarly determined by its symbology, its supposed identification with America, "modern informality" in the arts, bourgeois decadence, "the search for an authentic personal life," sex, and well-made clothes.

Most of the names of the Soviet jazzmen whose lives and accomplishments Mr. Starr chronicles could be known only to a student of this previously undealt with aspect of jazz history, though at least three of them, the trumpeter Adi (Eddie) Rosner, the singer and bandleader Leonid Utesov, and the pianist Alexander Tsfasman, managed to find some recognition outside the USSR, mostly from European audiences. Tsfasman, according to Mr. Starr, "was the first soloist in Soviet jazz and the first Russian to make a profession in the new music," as well as being the first to achieve "what no Soviet band before him had attempted: he could swing." According to James Lincoln Collier, a writer less disposed to make the most of the necessarily derivative achievements of "Soviet jazz," Tsfasman "essayed a little awkward stride style reminiscent of James P. Johnson."

However he may have actually sounded, during the Stalin era Tsfasman was "the uncrowned king of Russia." Recalled as such by his contemporary Juri Jelagin, concertmaster of the State Jazz Orchestra of the USSR, he owed his title as much to "his personal *savoir faire*, his disdain for Soviet bureaucracy, and his bandsmen's obstreperous lifestyles" as to his piano playing. "Unquestionably one of the best dressed men in the Sovet Union," he "had a vast wardrobe of custom-tailored suits in bright colors, especially blues, greens, and maroons. In the summertime he favored whites and light tans, all quite extraordinary in Stalin's Russia. . . . Just to maintain this extravagant persona must have demanded prodigious expenditures of time and money, not to mention research into underground sources for fine fabrics."

To Tsfasman's Moscow and Leningrad nightclub audiences, "the fifteen-foot-high saxophone cutouts on either side of the bandstand proclaimed that here was forbidden fruit openly available on the market." The members of his band, the Moscow Guys, "drank hard, even for Russians, and one of their number, saxophonist Alexander Vasiliev, eventually died of alcoholism," thereby deserving some comparison to Bix Beiderbecke, Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker, and the music's other *poètes maudits* in the West. Casually accomplished by private means in a society whose leaders claimed the right to determine such matters "from above," here at least was an authentic jazzman's death.

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The Reader Replies . . . . . .

The Acid Test: Advice to My Son

I regret that Joseph Meredith's prizewinning poem of advice to his son on choosing a wife (Spring 1984) omits the crucial test that its title leads one to expect. I wonder, but shall never know, if Mary Elinore Smith would have welcomed an addendum to Mr. Meredith's well-structured poem, somewhat as follows:

> But wait! Don't curdle the acid
> before you have made the ultimate test.
> Is it for *you* this hag who gently
> rests her fingers on your forearm prays?
> Raise your aching back and look beyond
> the fading visions of your youthful self.
> Dare to stare into the blackness of
> your last mile on Earth. Does she pray
> for strength to hang in there with you—
> the you that has become for her a cranky
> old potbellied, nitpicking bore? If so,
> she is the one. Cherish her until uncaring
> death withdraws her from your side.

HAROLDINE M. SEARLE
Fort Worth, Texas

The Continuing Crisis: Fashions in Education

I disagree with Professor Diane Ravitch's article in the Spring 1984 SCHOLAR. John Dewey believed in the method of intelligence and desired it to be widely diffused. He wanted to democratize liberal education through applying this method, his instrumentalist theory of knowledge, to the educational realm. Student life-experiences and interests were conceived as the beginning, never as the end of the educational process. Rather, Dewey conceived this as the intelligent reconstruction of experience, a reconstruction fully amenable to the teacher's guiding role. Pragmatic intellect and the authority of experience were always accorded a preeminent place in Dewey's thought.

Professor Ravitch has not recognized this in her criticism of John Dewey. Rather, she misstates Dewey's actual position, and further alleges that the triumph of Dewey's thought seduced our educational system into an ill-conceived utilitarianism and anti-intellectualism. Even Richard Hofstadter has refused to countenance this argument in his *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*. To establish her case, Professor Ravitch will have to clearly show that Dewey's thought was professionally triumphant, that it was riven with a narrow commercialistic anti-intellectualism, and that it was precisely this body of thought that actually led our educational establishment astray. All these points, however, are highly dubious. Indeed, the principle of Occam's razor counsels us to look in another direction—the generally anti-intellectual orientation of American society. Dewey's thought may be flawed, it may even be readily amenable to misinterpretation. It is not, however, the primary cause of our contemporary educational malaise.

DAVID SLIVE
Buffalo, New York

DIANE RAVITCH replies: I am puzzled by Mr. Slive's overreaction to a passing reference to John Dewey in my article about the pedagogical and ideological trends within the education profession. For some reason unrelated to the text of the article, Mr. Slive assumes that I blame Dewey for everything that has gone wrong in American education, and this single sentence is made to bear the freight of a thoroughgoing attack on Dewey's philosophy. Needless to say, no one could possibly state Dewey's "position" in a single sentence, and I did not try to do so. Nor did I in this article allege that he "seduced our educational system into an ill-

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conceived utilitarianism and anti-intellectualism." Nor did I say, as Richard Hofstadter did in the work cited by Mr. Slive, that "the effect of Dewey's philosophy on the design of curricular systems was devastating." Indeed, much of the second chapter of my book *The Troubled Crusade* consists of an effort to rescue Dewey from his overzealous disciples, whom Dewey felt compelled to rebuke in *Experience and Education* in 1938. The case I was making in this article was directed not against Dewey, but against the anti-intellectualism and utilitarianism of the pedagogical mainstream. I made no effort here to decipher the nature of Dewey's influence on that mainstream, a task already well performed by Lawrence A. Cremin in *The Transformation of the School*. I think it fair to say that the conventional wisdom of the profession for much of this century has reflected extensive misuse and misinterpretation of Dewey's ideas.

The Ant and the Twig

I enjoyed reading J. C. Furnas's "The Ant and the Twig" in the Winter 1983/84 issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, but (as I'm sure I'm not the first to point out) your revision of a passage from *King Lear* is somewhat disconcerting. You say that Shakespeare wrote "Like flies to wanton boys are we to the gods, / They maim us for their sport." The correct verb is *kill* rather than *maim*. To be maimed, rather than killed, may fit your thesis about the gods' capriciousness better, but, alas, you're emending the text.

DAVID ISAACSON
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan

J. C. FURNAS replies: Your correction of my quote from *King Lear* in "The Ant and the Twig" is valid, yes indeed, "kill," not "maim." The charming and erudite wife of a classmate of mine told me sooner than did your welcome note. I replied to her that indeed I stood corrected but on reflection, and at the risk of sacrilege, I thought I had subliminally improved The Bard. For, a maimed creature, say a fly with its wings pulled off, the proverbial bad boy's sport, would afford the sadistic temperament more entertainment than killing, as you suggest.

A friend out on the Coast, whom I never before suspected of being a Civil War buff, wrote me that it was Hooker, not Burnside, whom that cannonball discombobulated. It isn't everybody who can misquote Shakespeare and misidentify a Civil War general in the same few thousand words. I think THEY must have been laying for me.

But I thank you for having liked the other words.

Bertrand Russell and the Eliots

It is distinctly remarkable that men of letters should publish a piece so plainly appealing to the prurient interest and so lacking in socially redeeming value as Professor Bell's learned excursion into the "triangle" that consisted of "Bertrand Russell and the Eliots" (Summer 1983). I cannot fault Professor Bell for following the "suggestion" of "unusual intimacy and an inexplicable break"; after all, it is he who writes "where scholars fear to tread, gossips enter." It does not occur to the Professor that gossip is distinguished by its content, not its form, and that it therefore makes very little difference that "Bertrand Russell and the Eliots" consists only of the most learned prying into indelicacies imaginable. Indeed, the piece is the most exquisitely written bit of rubbish I have come across in quite some time—which is why it is so annoying. The piece quite plainly belongs to that distinct genre written by and for men with more wits and time than is good for their character and through the reading of which one is supposed to remark, daintily and at regular intervals, "How disgusting, but how sensitive," and keep right on. Bell offers us "revelation in its deepest sense," the climax of which is—yes, yes—"sexual guilt" and "a sad fate"—"He slept with her, possibly at her urging, only after an intense and protracted (if ambiguous) friendship": this is the learned (if ambiguous) conclusion to which we are, by thousands of pretty words and many fine quotations, drawn.

As the publication of Phi Beta Kappa, THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR can do better than place Aristides' reflections on "Work and its Contents" between the same covers as such distinguished gossip as "Bertrand Russell and the Eliots." And the faculty of English at Williams can teach more courses, so that they have less time on their hands to conduct "research."

JOSEPH S. FULDA
Polytechnic Institute
Brooklyn, New York

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With Molly Hooper Warner (Mrs. Roger S. Warner),
a niece of Henry Adams, on the flats at Rye, 1906.
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